

The TRUTH of the
CHRISTIAN RELIGION

DEMONSTRATED
Both from *Reason* and *Revelation*,

Conformable to the
Doctrines of the Church of England,

IN TWELVE *Bellamy (San)*
DISCOURSES, ^F

Deliver'd at the
Parish-Church of KINGSTON upon
Thames, and at PETERSHAM in
the County of Surrey.

WITH
A COLLECTION of PRAYERS for the Use of
Private Families.



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St. Paul's-church-yard.

M.DCC.XLIV.

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

By the Rev. J. H. ...

London: ...

DISCOUR

...





To the Reverend

Mr. WILLIAM COMER,

Vicar of *Kingston upon Thames*, in the County
of *Surrey*.

Reverend Sir,

THO' I am sensible the following
Discourses have too little Me-
rit in them to deserve your Pa-
tronage and Protection, yet I flatter
myself, that the good Intentions of
the Author, whom you are pleased to
honour with your Friendship, will in
some Measure plead their Excuse.

A

And

DEDICATION.

And here, Sir, give me Leave to indulge my Vanity, in informing the Publick that some of them have received your judicious Corrections; and I could sincerely wish, for my Readers sake as well as my own, that your other more important Avocations would have permitted you to set them in a fairer and more advantageous Light; for then I should have been well assured of publishing Something to the World, that would be worthy of their Perusal; and I might have depended, moreover, on having this First Essay much better received, than at present, I fear, it will; since your long established Merit, and extraordinary Talents are universally known and admired.

Upon this Occasion, I cannot pass over in Silence those repeated Civilities which I have met with from you, ever since I have had the Honour to assist you in the Work of the Ministry; and this I shall always have Cause to remember, with a greater
Warmth

DEDICATION.

Warmth of Gratitude; since you were pleased to shew me very distinguishing Marks of your Esteem, at a Time when I was deceived by some others, in whom I reposed the utmost Confidence, and whose Professions of Friendship, I thought as sincere as they were extraordinary.

I shall not be censured, I hope, for hinting thus at a private Transaction in a publick Address; since I am conscious, that even This will be more acceptable to you, than a Detail of your many amiable Qualifications, by the bare Enumeration of which, I should run the Risk of incurring your Displeasure.

I well know, that to a generous Mind, nothing can be more disagreeable than Flattery; and for my own Part, I should blush to be thought capable of some an a Vice; but, at the same Time, well known and unquestionable Truths may surely be repeated without Offence; for which Reason, I must beg Leave to say, that

DEDICATION.

when I reflect on your universal Character, I cannot but be under some Apprehensions, that the Generality of my Readers will look on my ushering this weak Performance into the World under the Sanction of your Name, as an artful Contrivance; and to confess the Truth, I am of Opinion, that if any Thing can make it live beyond the usual Term of such new and crude Productions, it will be the happy Choice I have made of a Patron. And I am not insensible, that it will turn to my Advantage ingenuously to acknowledge an Artifice, which I have been guilty of; but I hope, I shall have your Pardon, when I declare, in this publick Manner, that very many Passages, which, from the Attention that was given to them, will I conceive be esteemed the greatest Embellishment of my Work, came originally from yourself, being what I had collected from my repeated Conversations with you. As I have in many Instances experienced your
Candour

DEDICATION.

Candour and Generosity, I hope you will not censure me for this innocent Theft, since my Readers, who (I presume) will be principally your Parishioners, are likely to reap the Advantage of it.

Give me Leave, before I conclude, to assure you, that I shall be ever ambitious of deserving the Honour of your Friendship, and shall be always ready to acknowledge, with all due Deference and Respect, that I am, Reverend Sir,

Your much Obligated, and most

Obedient, Humble Servant,

*Kingston upon Thames,
August 15, 1744.*

Daniel Bellamy.

DEDICATION

Candid and Generous, I hope you
will not censure me for this innocent
I have to my readers, who I pro-
fess will be especially your Pa-
trons, and likely to read the Ad-
vantages of it.

Give me leave, before I conclude,
to state your own share of every sin-
gular of delivering the History of
your country, which has always
ready to be read with the due
attention.



For more Obliged than
I can express myself
to be, I am, Sir,
Your most Obedient
Servant,

Daniel Bellamy

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for Large Paper.

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Y

- *THE Right Honourable Sir William Yonge,*
Secretary at War, 2 Books

THE CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The Introduction.

I. John, i. 3.

That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have Fellowship with us; and truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. — Page 1.

SERMON II.

That there is a Supreme Being.

Psaln xiv. ver. 1.

The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God. Page 1.

SERMON III.

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

Psaln xiv. latter Part of ver. 1.

They are corrupt; they have done abominable Works; there is none that doeth good. — Page 18.

SERMON IV, V, VI.

A Future State demonstrated, from the Nature of the Soul, &c.

Acts xxiii. ver. 8.

The Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit. — Page 38, 53, 68.

SERMON VII, VIII.

A Future State demonstrated, from the Universal Consent of Mankind.

Acts xxiii. ver. 8.

The Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit. — Page 84, 101

SERMON

THE CONTENTS.

SERMON IX.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures demonstrated, from the Sublimity of their Style; &c.

II. St. Peter, i. ver. 21.

Holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ————— Page 114

SERMON X.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures demonstrated, from Prophecy.

II. St. Peter, i. ver. 21.

For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man: But Holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. ————— Page 129

SERMON XI.

The Christian Religion demonstrated, from the Writings of the New Testament.

Acts xxvi. 26.

This Thing was not done in a Corner. — Page 144

SERMON XII.

The Conclusion.

Acts vii. ver. 1.

Are these Things so? ————— Page 160

A Collection of Prayers.





THE
T R U T H
OF THE
Christian Religion,

Demonstrated both from

REASON *and* REVELATION,

Conformable to the DOCTRINES of the

Church of England.



REVISED EDITION

THE

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REVISED EDITION

S E R M O N I.

The Introduction.

I JOHN i. 3.

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have Fellowship with us; and truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

ST. *John*, in the Beginning of this Epistle, declares SERM.
I. that he, as well as the rest of the Apostles, had Demonstration of the Truth of what they preached to the World; that they saw the Glory of God, manifested in his Son *Jesus*; that they were Eye-witnesses of his Death and Resurrection; that they had every Kind of Proof they could desire; for they not only saw, but familiarly conversed with him after he was risen, on which Account there could be no Possibility of their being deceived; that therefore they were certain of the Truth of all those Things which had made such a Noise in the World, and that they declared only what they had seen and heard, and with no other View, than that all People might have Fellowship with them, and with the Father, and with his Son *Jesus Christ*. — This is the Purport of Part of this Chapter: — And in the same Strain might the Ministers of Christ still address their Hearers. The Being, Glory and Power of God, which we have clearly seen from the wonderful Works of Nature; those great Truths, which we have learnt from the Holy Scriptures, and from those learned Men, who have made

SERM. it their whole Study and Employment to illustrate those Sacred Writings; those we declare unto you, those we set before you in the clearest Light we are able, *that ye may have Fellowship with us*, and truly *our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*. — This is the End which every one, who is called to be a Preacher of God's Word, ought always to have in View, and prosecute to the utmost of his Power.

Being fully persuaded therefore, that it is the Duty of every one of our Profession to declare these Things, to the End that we may all have Fellowship in *Christ Jesus*, I, tho' the least among the Number set apart for so glorious a Purpose, propose, by God's Assistance, to lay before you, in the subsequent Discourses, to which this only is intended as an Introduction, some serious Reflections on the following great and important Subjects, namely, *First*, That there is a Supreme Being. *Secondly*, The Certainty of a Future State. *Thirdly*, The Divine Authority of the Scriptures. And lastly, the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion: Subjects so absolutely necessary to be consider'd by all Persons, that their Eternal Happiness or Misery greatly depends upon their being duely influenced by them.

Tho' I very readily, and with the sincerest Joy, confess, that these Topics have already been illustrated and established by much abler Pens than mine, yet 'tis possible, but few of my Hearers have had that Opportunity of reading, or reflecting seriously on those fundamental Articles of our most Holy Faith, as we have had; and whilst there remains one unconverted, or unconvinced Person among us, it would be a Shame for our Profession to be silent. — But, should there be Men hardy enough to blaspheme the tremendous God

of

The INTRODUCTION.

ii

of Heaven, and to set at nought his Holy Word; SERM.
should there arise Crouds of impious Wretches, I.
who make a Mock at Sin, and laugh at Religion; {
should there be Others, who, notwithstanding they
profess themselves Disciples of the *Blessed Jesus*,
practise all the Duties of Christianity, if they practise
them at all, with the utmost Coldness and Indif-
ference; should there be such as these, is there not
abundant Reason, think you, for us to declare a-
gainst such Impiety, and to use our best Endeavours
to stop the Progress of so growing an Evil?

It must be acknowledged, tho' with Shame and
Confusion of Face, that this Age abounds with
too many of this Sort; that not only the Aban-
doned and Licentious, who are not ashamed open-
ly to practise all Manner of Vice and Wicked-
ness; but even some sober serious Persons are weak
enough to subscribe to those pernicious Tenets of
theirs which introduced and cherished it; that there
are Men, with one Foot in the Grave, who are
foolish and daring enough to maintain with Zeal
and Warmth the Devil's Cause; that too many
frequent our Churches, not to grow better
by what they shall hear, but to cavil and find
fault; if this be the true State of the Case (and
that it is really so, I am persuaded every under-
standing Man in this whole Assembly will acknow-
ledge, tho' I hope with Grief) there can surely
need no Apology for offering the strongest Argu-
ments we can collect, in order to confirm the
weak, and to recall such Sheep as are either thus lost,
or run astray. Who knows but Conviction, like
Lightning, may flash upon them; but some who
came here with mean, ungenerous Views, may
meet with Something, which may give them a
new Turn; and while they seek only an Amuse-
ment,

SERN. ment, may find That which may prove of infinite
I. Advantage to them?

'Tis too melancholy a Truth, that there are some Men so unaccountably attach'd to their Pleasures, that they will not allow themselves the least Time for Reflection on any other Objects; never will admit a Thought of, or pay the least Regard to the God that made them, and are greater Strangers to the Excellency of their own Natures, and the inestimable Value of their Souls, the Welfare of which ought doubtless to be their greatest Concern, than to the most remote Deserts of *India*, or the most dangerous and unfrequented Paths of the tempestuous Ocean.

'Tis in a great Measure owing to this unhappy Disposition, that we find so many Atheists flocking round us, who, to do them Justice, attain to that Pitch of Impiety, not so much by the Dint of Reason, as the Silence and Suppression of it; not by exerting their rational Faculties, but by stifling the free Exercise of them, or rather drowning them in the sensual Enjoyments of this transitory World, — 'Tis true, indeed, there are but very few, who will acknowledge themselves to be absolutely Atheists; but there are Multitudes, who, if you'll give Credit to their Actions, if you'll attend to their Discourse, will do all that lies in their Power to convince you that they are so: There have been, we all know, many specious Names contrived of late, by which the Ignorant and Unwary have been caught; and in order to gain the Friendship or Applause, or even Admission to a Set of impious Men, there have been those, who have given into the most horrid Blasphemies; have discoursed of an Almighty Being with the same, or greater Indifference, than they would of any earthly Prince, and without any seeming Concern robbed him of every

The INTRODUCTION.

every Attribute, till they have represented him **SERM.**
just such a God as their base Fears would wish him: **I.**
Of these mistaken and ill-judging Men, I shall
take further Notice at another Time; at present I
shall only offer to discover some few Reasons of
theirs, which have induced them to embrace such
dark and erroneous Notions.

The first and principal One is this;—they are
conscious to themselves of that vast Load of Guilt
which they have contracted, and are tempted, by
their Hopes of avoiding the Judgments of the
Almighty, to distrust, if not deny his Justice and
Providence. For of these misguided, I may say,
infatuated Men, we may very well conclude, that
their Reason is so blinded, so biassed by the va-
rious Allurements of this present World, in which
it centers, that they cannot entertain a Thought
of, or propose to themselves the least Happiness
beyond it.

Some indeed will give their Thoughts a little
larger Latitude with regard to God and themselves;
will acknowledge a Deity, and confess that he has
bestow'd on Man an immortal Soul; that he is
the all-wise Governor of the Universe, and that
'tis our bounden Duty, as well as Interest, to obey
him: But when they consider, that there are Hea-
thens, Jews, Turks and Christians, dispers'd all
over the habitable World, and different Nations,
all of different Faiths; that each of these con-
ceive their own Way of Worship purest, and that
the Religion they profess gives them the best and
surest Title to Salvation; like some timorous
Travellers at a Cross-way, instead of going forward
in the right Path, by the Guidance and good Con-
duct of their Judgment, they stand still, confounded
and surpris'd, and in that Labyrinth of Thought
conclude,

SERM. conclude, that they all strike into one common

I. Road at last.

If these Men would but exercise their Reason, and distinguish between Truth and Falshood, Godliness and Impiety, with the same Care and Circumspection only as a common Tradesman between Profit and Loss, they would readily discern, by innate Principles, and natural Conclusions, the true Religion from the false, and the strait Way, which God himself hath chalk'd out for them, in order to their safe Arrival at eternal Happiness, from the crooked Paths of perverse and wilful Sinners.

If these Men are miserable and unhappy, from their dangerous and destructive Opinions, as I doubt not, almost every one here present will very readily allow they are, what then must those be, who profess themselves Members of the Christian Church; who constantly, in the most solemn and publick Manner, assent to all the Articles of its most Holy Faith, and yet by their loose and unguarded Lives, too evidently demonstrate that their Devotion is merely formal; who publish to others, indeed, that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, and yet by their Practice shew, that they esteem this World their continuing City; who are ambitious perhaps to be reckoned Saints, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ, Sons of so rich a Father, and Heirs, thro' Grace, to so glorious an Inheritance; and yet so little regard those inestimable Blessings, that they seldom, if ever, take them into their serious Consideration, and set so low a Price on their Birth-right, that they are ready at all times, with *Esau*, to sell it for a Mess of Pottage?

Now or never, therefore, it must be needful to rouse up such out of their Lethargy, to recall those
who

who are walking in the broad Way that leads to **SERM.**
 Destruction, to strengthen the feeble Knees, and **I.**
 kindle in the Breasts of those, who are neither
 cold nor hot, a flaming Zeal for their most Holy
 Religion: And the only Way to make this At-
 tempt successful, is to paint, in the most lively
 Colours our Imagination can suggest, the Beauties
 of Christianity, those Joys, which Eye hath not
 seen, nor Ear heard, and those Rivers of Pleasure,
 which are at God's Right-hand for evermore; that
 so the Voluptuous may be induced to search for
 true Delights, the Covetous for Riches, and the
 Ambitious for Honours, at that never-failing
 Spring, which can fully gratify their unbounded
 Appetites, and render them compleatly happy.

But before I proceed any further, I shall endeavour to give a satisfactory Answer to some, who may perhaps object against an Undertaking of this Nature. It has often been observed, that the Atheist, the Deist, and several other mistaken Men, ranked under different Denominations, are so unaccountably prejudiced against every Thing that bears the Face of Religion, so bigotted to their own Opinions, that tho' the strongest and most convincing Arguments have been brought against them, Arguments, which the wisest of them have not been able to gainsay, are so resolute in their Opinions, so attached to their fancied Liberty, that they'll even be deaf to Conviction. For which Reason many good Men have given over this Task, as an Undertaking fruitless and unsuccessful, and have zealously advised Others to do the like, lest they should do the Enemies Work for them, by raising Doubts in Mens Minds, who otherwise perhaps might never have had any.

This I must confess would be a very substantial Objection, were it literally true; but even then,

SERM. Then, I would offer this in Answer: Atheism and
I. Infidelity, or Something very like it, is crept almost into every Place, and I may venture to say, there is no considerable Country-Town throughout the whole Kingdom, but has more or less professed Contemners of Religion; if so, what Advantages may they not make among the Weak and Illiterate from our Silence on the fundamental Principles of our Religion? May they not insinuate, that we dare not attack them? May they not impute our Silence to the Weakness of our Cause? We are sensible how well adapted to the Wickedness of the Times are their Doctrines; that Men, who give a Loose to Pleasure and Debauchery, are willing to catch at the least Shadow of a Hope that they shall not be called to Judgment. To reflect on a Future State, when they can expect nothing but Torment from it, must be very uncomfortable to them; no Wonder then, that the weakest Arguments are strong enough to persuade them to list under the Banner of Infidelity!

Moreover, how can we expect to turn the Sinner from his evil Way, if we do not first of all demonstrate to him the Danger of his Sins, and at the same Time lay before him the joyful Doctrine of Forgiveness? The Subjects, therefore, which I propose to enter upon, are well worth my utmost Pains to set in the clearest Light, and yours to give the most serious Attention to. To furnish the Weak with convincing Arguments for putting to Silence the Atheist and Infidel, is surely no trivial Undertaking. This is what I hope to accomplish, and that you may have an Idea, of the Probability of my Success in this Attempt, I shall lay down, in a few Words, the Method I intend to pursue.

The INTRODUCTION.

in

In the first Place then, I shall endeavour to **SERM.**
avoid every Thing which, instead of improving, **I**
may confound the Ideas of my Hearers: I shall
study to be plain and easy, rather than abstruse
and unintelligible: And, if I can prove, even to
a Demonstration, which by the Blessing of God
I trust I can, that there is a God, who created
all Things, and, at the same time, is all Just and
Good; if I can prove we shall either be rewarded
hereafter for our Virtues, or punished for our
Vices; if I can prove the Divine Authority of
the Holy Scriptures, and the Truth of the Christi-
an Religion: After such a Foundation is laid, every
Doctrine, which we can prove from those Sacred
Writings, and Principles, will command your As-
sent and Obedience; since you must then be sen-
sible, that no less than everlasting Happiness or
Misery is the Consequence.

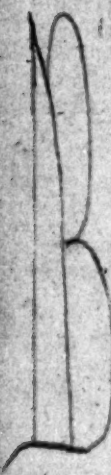
In my Discourse with the Atheists, I shall pro-
duce the World; the several Parts of the Crea-
tion; nay, their very selves, as living Witnesses
against them: And then I shall appeal to their
Understandings, whether such Things must not
be the Work of some Being superior to Man, of
an All-powerful God, whom, tho' we cannot see
with our outward Eyes, yet by the Light of our
Reason we can plainly discern his Sovereignty over
the whole Creation: *The invisible Things of God,*
from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen,
being understood by the Things that are made, even
his eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are
without Excuse. I hope to be so copious upon this
Subject, as that none, but those who are wilfully
blind, shall doubt of so glaring a Truth.

In

SERM.

I

In my Proof of a Future State, that those, who wou'd willingly believe there is no such Thing, may not have the poor Pretence of saying, that it is to be discover'd no Way but from the Scriptures, the Authority whereof they call in Question, I shall first lay aside Revelation, and prove from Reason, that as the Being of a God, which I hope to have then put beyond the Reach of Contradiction, is certain, so is his Divine Justice. I shall prove therefore from the Nature of the Soul, the almost universal Consent of Mankind, the unequal Distributions of the good Things of this Life, and from other substantial, and I hope convincing Arguments, that there must be a Life after This, where the just and upright Man will meet with a full Compensation for all his Troubles and Misfortunes, and he that is wicked will be thrown into such inexpressible Torments as are due to his Demerits. * — *So that a Man shall say, verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth.*



In my Proof of the Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, I shall take notice of the Style and Manner in which they are delivered; then I shall shew, that the *Books of Moses* were the Source or Spring from whence all Nations drew what little Notions they had of God, of the Creation of the World, and other remarkable Events: That the Prophet *Isaiab* foretold, not only the Birth of a Great ^b King, many Years before it happen'd, but even his particular Actions, the Destruction of that great and proud City of *Babylon*, and even the Name of its Destroyer: I shall demonstrate, that no Being, but an Omniscient God, could possibly

* *Psalms* lviii. 11.^b *Cyrus*.

The INTRODUCTION.

xi

possibly have foreseen, or foretold such Events; **SERM.**
and the Conclusion will be very natural, namely, **I.**
that the Sacred Scriptures must be written by Di-
vine Inspiration.

From thence I shall proceed to the Proof of the Christian Religion, from the Progress it made in a short Time; from the Testimony of Men, who abandon'd every Thing, Life itself, in Defence of a Doctrine, of the Truth of which they had every Kind of Proof; and, I hope, when these Things are duly weigh'd, you'll see the Baseness and Absurdity of some Men, and be convinced of the absolute Necessity there is for every one of us to follow the Precepts of our most Holy Religion; to serve God with all our Souls, and with all our Strength; to be constant in the due Discharge of our publick, as well as private Duties; to be honest and just in all our Dealings; to love our Neighbour as ourselves; to do to all Men, as we would that they shou'd do unto us: In a Word, to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling.

In the Prosecution of these few promised Discourses, I am determin'd to spare no Pains to be well inform'd myself, nor do I intend to offer any Arguments which are not solid and substantial, or which at least shall not, in my Opinion, appear to be so; nor urge, or insist upon that, which I am not fully convinc'd of in my own Judgment; always making choice of such as are most obvious and incontestible, and adapting them as much as possible to the Capacity of every Hearer.

To conclude, I must beg my Hearers Patience and Attention, entreat them to lay aside all Prejudice and Prepossession, and to judge impartially; for Prejudice is too apt to blind and captivate the Judgment

SERM.

I.

Judgment of the most Ingenious: And above all, let them consider, that some of the Myſteries of Religion are above the Capacities and Comprehensions of the wiſeſt of Men; and, as I am one of the leaſt among Men, if I ſhould not give perfect Satisfaction in ſome Particulars, I hope they will excuſe my Infirmities, and conſider, that my weak Capacity is not able to extend itſelf to the utmoſt Limits of human Knowledge; and the moſt refined Comprehensions can never be able to diſcover all the Myſteries of Truth; ſo that my Ignorance and imperfect Performance can be no Ways prejudicial to the Chriſtian Cauſe, which I have not undertaken to defend, out of any vain Conceit of my own Abilities; nor do I flatter myſelf, I ſhall be able to bring ſtronger Arguments than have already been urged in Defence of ſo juſt and good a Cauſe; but I muſt acknowledge, that I have ſome Hopes of ſetting theſe Truths in ſo clear a Light, as may be of Service to that Part of my Auditors at leaſt, who have little Time for reading, and very few other Opportunities of being inſtructed in the Doctrines of their moſt Holy Religion, than thoſe afforded them, from a regular Attendance on *Sundays*, at the ſtated Hours of publick Worſhip. It is therefore a Duty highly incumbent on us to ſow ſuch Seed, as we ſhall judge moſt conducive to forward the Work of Salvation; and 'tis your Duties likewiſe to attend conſtantly, and diligently to theſe Things, upon which your future Welfare ſo very much depends: Surely no one, who firmly believes that he ſhall live, either in the moſt exalted Pleaſures, or in the moſt exquisite Torments for ever and ever, will ſtand in Need of being intreated to lend the cloſeſt Attention.

Now may it pleaſe the Divine Majeſty to give a Bleſſing to theſe our Labours, that they may build
up

The INTRODUCTION.

xiii

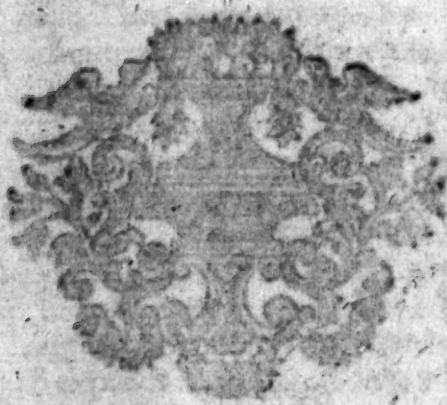
up those, in their most Holy Faith, who already SERM.
believe, confirm and establish those, who are wa- I.
vering and unstable, and confute those, who ob-
stinately oppose his Sacred Doctrine! This is the
only Satisfaction I propose to myself; this the ut-
most Ends of my Ambition: And to confess free-
ly, I feel, methinks, the joyful Effects, and see
the agreeable Prospect lie before me.— But above
all, let us humbly implore his Divine Goodness,
to soften our stony Hearts with the Influence of
his Spirit, and with his own Right-hand to plant in
them the Seeds of his true Religion, that they may
there take deep Root, and bring forth Fruit an
hundred-fold, to his Honour and Glory: For
'tis God alone, who can work a thorough Change
and Reformation in us; tho' 'tis in our Power, to
exhort and persuade one another to come to the
Knowledge of the Truth.



SERM.

THE INTRODUCTION.

no shade in their most Holy Faith, who already
believe, cherish and cherish those who are
veiling and unfeeling, and contain those who are
literally opposite to the Sacred Doctrine I see in the
only satisfaction I look to myself; and the
most kind of my Ambition; And so much is
iv. I feel, instills the joyful life, and see
the admirable Professor of the faith; — I am
all, let us humbly follow his Divine Command
to follow our holy Father with the substance of
his spirit, and with his own Right hand to grant
them the grace of his Holy Religion, that they may
there be deep Rest, and bring forth fruit in
unfading joy, to his Father and Glory; For
his God alone, who is the Father of our
and Restoration in our Father, to
exhort and persuade to come to the
Knowledge of the Truth.



S E R M O N II.

That there is a Supreme Being.

PSALM xiv. Ver. I.

The Fool bath said in his Heart, there is no God.

THE Sense of the preceding Words is so very plain and obvious, that one would think they should need no Comment to explain them. The Being of a God is so evident from every Object that furrounds us; that no one *but a Fool* could possibly say *in his Heart, there is no God*; but since all Ages have produced Men, who either actually have been, or at least have pretended to be, Atheists; and since many, even in exalted Stations, and reputed Men of Sense, have, in order to promote some wicked Designs of their own, used their utmost Endeavours to draw the Ignorant and Unwary into such an unhappy Way of Thinking, it can never be improper to advise all Men, to have Recourse to their Reason, and examine thoroughly into a Circumstance of such Importance, and not indolently and wickedly to betray their own Souls to Misery and Destruction, because others are either so foolish, that they cannot see, or so wicked, that they stifle their own Consciences, and will neither cast their Eyes on the wonderful Works of Nature, nor reflect within themselves, that there must be some Power superior to them, who could create a World replete with such a Variety of beautiful and useful Objects. Let me appeal to any, the most Illiterate

SERM.
II.

SERM. here present; supposing they had never heard that
II. there was a Supreme Being; supposing they never
 had any Idea of a God before, and were to be
 ask'd, Who it was that made this World, and
 all Things that are contain'd therein? Who order'd the Course of the Sun? Who it was that regulated the Seasons, and caused the Earth to be productive of such a vast Variety of Fruits? Let me appeal, I say, to the most Illiterate, whether they would not readily answer, There is certainly a Being whom we can see no otherwise than in his Works, who orders and disposes of all Things at his Will and Pleasure. Nay, even Children, by being shewn the various Works of Nature, will perceive the Force of this Reasoning; and shall Man be so proud, so stupid, or disingenuous, to deny what is as evident to Sense, as Light and Heat? But whilst there are such wicked, such abandon'd Wretches to be met with, it cannot be improper sometimes to persuade Men to a serious Reflection on the Deity, in the Works of Nature; and as we may be as clearly convinced, that there is a God, as that we now live, let such a Consideration have a proper Effect upon our future Conduct. How shall we dare to sin, when we are conscious that an All-powerful God not only sees, but has assured us he will punish all Evil-doers? But Arguments of this Nature will be more proper in another Discourse; it is my Design at present only to prepare you for such Considerations, by endeavouring to raise in you a Desire to look a little nearer into the Wonders of Nature, * "Which is the Art of God, " a bright Display of that Divine Wisdom, which " demands an eternal Tribute of Wonder and " Worship."

That there is a Supreme Being.

3

In the Illustration of this noble Subject, I shall point out to you those Things only, which are daily obvious to your View, and which a Man, that has any Curiosity at all, must often have reflected on in his own Mind : And he must be weak indeed, that cannot demonstrate to any one who denies a Supreme Being, that he must do it in open Defiance, to Sense and Reason ; for 'tis so loudly proclaimed by the Voice of universal Nature, and engraven in such deep and legible Characters on the Minds of all Mankind, that all their Expressions, nay, all the most exalted Ideas their Imaginations can possibly entertain, fall vastly short of what every Object they behold discovers at one Glance to their awaken'd Senses.

SERM.
II.

If we look up, we view with a delightful Amazement the numerous Celestial Bodies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars, which, notwithstanding their almost infinite Motions, do not in the least clash or interfere with one another. If we look down, the Sea, which every Moment threatens the Land with a second Deluge, and yet obeys that irresistible Command of its awful Creator, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud Waves be stay'd* ; and the Earth on which we live, are the surprising Prospects that lie before us. These Contemplations naturally elevate our Thoughts, and insensibly lead them to the Notion of a God ; and the exact Order of the seemingly irregular Parts of the vast Universe, the beautiful Harmony which they all observe among themselves, and one with another, would soon be unhappily interrupted, if there was not a Superior Being to influence and direct them. But when we look into *Man*, that *Microcosm*, or *Little World*, and contemplate

^a Job xxxviii. 2.

SERM. his Body, adapted to various Actions, and his
 II. Soul, which, tho' invifible and incomprehenfible,
 can alter the Situation of the Body, as it pleafes,
 and is endued with a rational Faculty, continually
 directing all its Actions, we muft form a Concep-
 tion of an infinite Spirit, who made and governs
 the Univerfe, *in whom we live, move, and have
 our Being*, and by whom our Bodies were framed,
 after the Model of the Ideas in his all-comprehending
 Mind, and our Souls, after his own Image.
 This made an ancient ^d Philofopher very well ob-
 ferve, "That the firft Thing we conceive is the
 " Deity, which we rather feel, by a Divine Con-
 " tact, than know; and that this Knowledge is
 " the moft certain." ^e Another ftill goes farther,
 and boldly afferts, "That he who denies a Su-
 " preme Being, is not only void of Reason, but
 " Sense itfelf." Now if the Senfes, thofe Doors
 at which Knowledge enters, gives us fuch incon-
 teftible Proofs of his Divine Effence, and we are
 fully convinced, that an Object exifts, when we
 touch it, and *feel a Deity*, to talk in the Language
 of thefe Philofophers, in the World in general, and
 ourfelves in particular; then this muft be laid
 down for a firft Principle in Divinity, *That there
 is a God*; and he who calls fo apparent a Truth in-
 to Queftion, offers Violence to his very Nature,
 and renders himfelf more vile than the Brutes that
 perifh.

'Tis much to be lamented, that Men whofe
 Thoughts are continually employed in the Con-
 templation of the Things of this World, fhould
 be fo obftinate and confirm'd in Infidelity, as not

^c Acts xvii. 28.

^d *Hermes*, in *Pyramandro*.

^e *Jamblicus de Myfteriis*, cap. 2.

That there is a Supreme Being.

5

to grant what the curious Frame of that stupendous Fabrick, if duly consider'd, would plainly discover to them. SERM. II.

If we begin with the less curious Parts of the Creation, and thence proceed to those that bear the greater Marks of artful Contrivance, whether we consider them in general, or in particular, our Thoughts cannot but gradually lead us to an infinite God, that governs all Things by the Word of his Power.

Let us, in the *first* Place, take a transient View of the World in general. Now there are four *Species*, which gradually ascend in the Scale of *Being*. Some have only *Being*; others *Being* and *Life*; some *Being*, *Life*, and *Sense*; and others *Being*, *Life*, *Sense* and *Reason*. The Air, Sea, and Earth, tho' they support all living, sensitive, and rational Creatures, have only *Being*, that is, border the nearest on Non-existence. Plants, tho' they owe their Nutriment to the Earth, and Refreshment to the Air, have *Being* and *Life*. The Brutes, tho' obliged to the Elements and Plants for their Subsistence, have *Being*, *Life*, and *Sense*. Man is endued with *Being*, *Life*, *Sense*, and *Reason*, makes the Elements and Plants answer his Purpose, has an uncontrollable Power over the Brutal World, and exercises his rational Faculties in the delightful Contemplation of the wonderful Works of his great Creator; And he, who is not led by them to the All-wise Author of Nature, is altogether unworthy of the lowest and meanest Existence.

Now, whence proceeds this orderly Gradation and Distinction between one Rank of Beings and another? Why have some of them *Being* only, when others have *Being*, *Life*, *Sense* and *Reason*; some in a higher, others in a lower Degree? Was this

SERM. this owing to themselves, and whence came it to pass? Have not all Beings a natural Aversion to Subjection? How came such small Beings as Animals, if compared with the Heavenly Bodies, to excell them in so many Respects? Why has such an impotent Creature as Man a Sovereignty over the Elements, Plants, and most savage Beasts? There must be some Superior Being, who divided the Creatures into these several Classes, and originally had, and still has, an indisputable Title to them; and he must be Almighty, because, tho' they differ so widely in Point of Proportion, there is a perfect and uninterrupted Harmony preserved between them. Besides, there are but these four Ranks of Beings: We are all the Offspring of one common Parent, and Animals and Plants have their Original from whence they sprung. That which has only *Being* could not produce itself, since it wants those Perfections which other Beings enjoy, much less could it create another. And since Man is happily endued with all those excellent Faculties above mentioned, there must be a Power without him, that gave Being to him, who once did not exist, and made each Order of Creatures perfect in its Kind; otherwise Nothing must for ever have continued to be Nothing: But there is an infinite Distance between the most simple *Being* and Non-existence. There was therefore a first Cause, whom we adore, under the most venerable Title of the infinitely glorious JEHOVAH.

But, now let us take a Survey, first of the Heavenly Bodies, which, tho' they have a perpetual and rapid Motion, observe the greatest Regularity imaginable. Can this be owing to mere Chance? If so, why have they not, thro' some Casualty, stood still, in the Revolution of so many Ages? Besides, Chance creates nothing but Confusion,

That there is a Supreme Being.

7

fusion, whereas they observe an exact Order in all their Motions. What! do they move themselves? Doubtless, no; it would be the grossest Absurdity to suppose they could; for, to compare great Things with small, whenever we examine the Workmanship of any curious Machine, our Admiration rises from one Spring to another, till at last we are gradually brought to reflect on the Art and Contrivance of the Man who made it. SERM. II.

These Considerations naturally lead us to a First Mover, and this Harmony to a Being infinitely regular, and these finite Bodies to an infinite Spirit. And since we rise from what is less evident, and less material, to that which is more obvious, and more sublime; from the Earth to the Air, from thence to the Heavens, and from them to the Heaven of Heavens; let us raise our Thoughts to the Infinite Being, the Father of Lights, and Soul of the Universe, in Comparison of whom, *'all the Nations of the Earth are as the Drop of the Bucket, and the small Dust of the Balance.* And the great God has stamp'd such Signatures of his Perfections, even on the most minute Parts of the visible World, that *the^{*} invisible Things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead,*

If from the Heavenly Bodies we descend to this Earth, that comparatively little Spot, we cannot but observe, that the Grass, Trees, Fruits, Fishes, Reptiles, Birds, and each Creature is so compleat in its Kind, that nothing is either deficient or redundant. Is this owing to the Elements? Can they give *Life and Sense*, which they want themselves? Or were these Properties communicated

^f Isaiah xl. 15.

^{*} Romans i. 20.

SERM. to them by the Sun? No, every one's Reason will
 II. tell him they were not.

Besides, the vast Variety in the Works of Nature proclaims aloud an Eternal, All-knowing, and All-powerful Being; especially if we take their hidden Qualities into our serious Consideration: Some Plants are naturally hot, others cold; some sweet, others bitter; some serve for Food, others for Physick; some are direct Poison, others, tho' they all grow, perhaps, in one and the same Bed, are approved Antidotes against it. The savage Beasts frequent the most solitary Deserts, conscious, as it were, that their Society would be dangerous; whereas those that are tame, and serviceable to Mankind, naturally affect to herd together. Can this proceed from Chance? If we say the Sun warms the Earth, and observes his stated Course, and the Air moistens the Earth, which is serviceable to Plants, as they are to Animals, and Animals to Men, particular Belings to one another, and the Universe to each of them; whence proceeds this Chain of Causes? If Things were from Eternity self-existent, how came this Subordination? When did they enter into a Covenant one with another? How could some agree to be subservient to others? How did they exist originally? In a Seed, Flower, or Grain, &c.? Were they great or small? Which preceded, and which succeeded? for Animals cannot subsist without Plants, nor they without the Earth; nor can she bring forth her Fruit, without the benign Influence of the Heavenly Bodies. If they were all produced at once, how came so many, and such different Beings to agree, unless by the over-ruling Power of some superior and intelligent Being? It is rational therefore to suppose, that they were created at once, and
 with

That there is a Supreme Being.

9

with one Design, by an Almighty Power, directed SERM.
by infinite and unerring Wisdom. II.

Let us now consider how Man was created, for whom the World, and all Things therein contained, were made, and whether he was not created to promote the Glory of the great Author of his Being.

If we cast our Eyes on the Picture of any Friend, we naturally and readily reflect on the Artist who drew it. Now, if a Picture, which can only *look a Voice*, suggests to our Minds the living Object by whose Skill it was painted, much more should the exquisite Workmanship and curious Composition of an Animal, induce us to contemplate on, and pay Divine Adoration to the only living and true God, between whom and us there is an infinitely greater Disproportion, than between the most beautiful Original and its lifeless Copy.

The Contexture of Man's Body is so admirably contrived, that the most celebrated Artists borrow from it all their Rules of Symmetry and Proportion; and the Dependence of every Part on one another, and of each particular on the whole, is an incontestible Proof of a Supreme Being; for how can a Work, which displays all the Beauties of Contrivance, result from Chance? The Vulgar indeed attribute the Loss of an Arm, Eye, Leg, or any other Member, to Accident or Chance; but when they see the Lame walk, or the Blind receive their Sight, they readily exclude Chance, and acknowledge the Patient's Cure to be, under God, owing to the skilful Operations of the Surgeon or Oculist.

Again, with our Senses, we See, Hear, Feel, Taste, and Smell. Now, the same Being that made sensible Objects, furnish'd us with our Senses; for the former would be of no Use without the latter,

B

SERM. latter, nor the latter without the former. And
II. since they have so close a Connection with one another, which were first produced? If Man made sensible Objects, why does he not continue to exercise his creating Power? Or, if he gave himself his Senses, why does he ever lose them? They were doubtless the Effects of a Superior Cause. And why has he a Faculty of Speech, but to communicate his Thoughts? Now, did he make himself a sociable Creature? And, since he is happily distinguished from the rest of the Creation by his rational Endowments, was he not chiefly design'd for rational Exercises and Entertainments? And, if our Reason tells us we are but a Grain compared with the vast Universe, shall we be so partial as to confine her to ourselves? And, tho' she is peculiarly serviceable to us, yet since we are ignorant of the Nature and Original of our Souls, must not a Superior and Intelligent Being help us to it, and be much better acquainted with our natural Propensions than we ourselves? And, since we can give but a very imperfect Account of the Substance and Operations of our immaterial Souls, which vastly excell every thing that is corporeal, how could we make ourselves, and whom must we suppose to be the Author of our Being?

Short-sighted Man! Perhaps you look no farther back than to your natural Parents, tho' you ought to trace your Extraction up to its Original. You cannot, with any Justice, imagine yourself to be any more than instrumental in the Generation of your Child, which perhaps neither you, nor its Mother, any more thought of, at the Time of its Conception, than an Oak, which accidentally sheds its Acorns into a neighbouring Field, is apprehensive of their ever taking Root, and spreading, like herself, their beauteous Branches,

When

That there is a Supreme Being.

11

When you are desirous to have your Picture drawn, the Limner indeed takes a curious and exact Survey of every Feature and Lineament of your Face; desires you to sit several times, draws his Strokes by slow Degrees, corrects and alters what he finds defective, and exerts himself to the utmost, to make his Copy as lively an Imitation of Nature as possible. But your Case is not the same with his, in the Formation of your Child: You cannot determine whether you shall have a numerous Issue, or none at all; a Son or a Daughter. But farther, did you cause its Bones to knit in the Womb, its Blood to circulate in its Veins and Arteries, and its Pulse to beat, which you can no more command than that of the greatest Stranger to you? If you do not understand the Anatomy of its Parts, how could you give it Being? Besides, you can give no Account of its Thoughts and Imaginations, which you have no Power to check, or alter at your Pleasure. Can you then be justly said to create it? Doubtless, No. It is of a Divine Original: And since you are a Rational Being, you cannot suppose your Creator to be void of Reason; and, tho' you are ignorant of your own Nature, he must be perfectly acquainted with it.

What can I say, suitable to the Dignity of the Subject? Lord! shall I contemplate thee in Things above, or below? Thou hast made all Things, and the Universe is but a faint Image of thy infinite Perfections. *Bless the Lord, says David, ^a all his Works, ye Heavens, Waters, Winds, Thunder, Rains, Rivers and Seas, and thou, O my Soul, praise his holy Name for ever.*

^a Psalm cxlviii. 49.

SERM. To offer all the Proofs of the Being of a God,
 II. which the material World in general, and Man,
 that little World, in particular, afford us, would
 be endless, since even Children can *spell* some-
 thing of a Deity in every Page, in every Line of
 the vast Volume of the Creation.

The most barbarous Nations have had different Ideas of a God, according as their different Imaginations could make room to entertain them: In every Part of the habitable World, the Natives have had, and still do profess some Sort of Religion, have proper Times set apart for Prayer, Sacrifices, and other holy Rites and Ceremonies; and tho' they differ, according to the various Countries in which they are observed, yet all agree to own, at least to mean, one All-knowing, All-powerful, and Supreme Being: And the very Diversity of them is an undeniable Argument that this Notion was universal.

Within these two last Centuries several considerable Places have been found out, and the curious Traveller is daily making new Discoveries: And tho' in some Parts the barbarous Natives have no establish'd Laws for the Punishment of Vice, or the Reward of Virtue, but live in the open Air, and make use of no Dress, even to cover their Nakedness, yet even these have some Notions, tho' dark and imperfect, both of God and Religion. And 'tis as natural to Mankind to acknowledge the Deity, as to form themselves into Societies, to secure themselves from the Injuries of the Weather, and make Provision for their daily Subsistence.

It may not be improper, in this Place, to search a little into the Opinion which even the Heathens, in former Ages, had of the Supreme Being. The ancient

That there is a Supreme Being.

/ 13

SERM.

II.

ancient Priests and Philosophers never undertook an Affair of the least Importance, without first dedicating themselves to the Majesty of Heaven and Earth, and humbly imploring his Favour and Benediction on their honest Endeavours. And the ancient Poets, who were likewise Philosophers, invoked their great Creator. The Schools, so famous in former Ages, acknowledged a Supreme Being. Nay, the *Epicureans*, as licentious as they were, would have blushed to deny so self-evident a Truth.

Plato informs us, that the Ancients selected certain Persons out of their Philosophers for Priests; and by the Help of their philosophical Inquiries, attained to a more than ordinary Knowledge of the Perfections of the Divine Nature; to which they paid the humble Tribute of religious Adoration; and their Sentiments, which seldom happens but in a very obvious Case, exactly agreed with those of the common People.

Formerly indeed, some few inconsiderate Persons, not to speak of them in harsher Terms, openly disclaimed the Belief of a Deity, as there are too many, in the present Age, who tread in their unhappy Footsteps, but they were young Libertines, who resolved, at all Adventures, to gratify their sensual Appetites, and pursue their unlawful Enjoyments, without giving themselves Time for Reflection on the fatal Consequences that attended them, or for the Exercise of their rational Faculties, on Matters of greater Importance; though even they grew wiser, as they grew in Years: Or these Atheists were old Dotards, who perfectly un-

¹ The Disciples of *Epicurus*, a famous Philosopher at *Athens*, who held, that Pleasure, or rather an Indolency, *i. e.* a being free from Pain, was the *Summum Bonum*, or *chiefest Good*.

man'd

SERM. man'd themselves, by their shameful Debaucheries;
 II. and, that they might sin without remorse, endeavoured to argue themselves out of their Reason, and think that there was no God to summon them before his awful Tribunal. When any imminent Danger, however, threatened them, or the correcting Hand of the Almighty lay heavy on them; how would their coward Souls tremble, and start at the Alarm! And, when their Natures were almost spent, how would they catch at the very Shadow of a God! So hard will Conscience, when stifled, struggle to re-assume its native Liberty. They were afraid to acknowledge a Deity, because they dreaded his offended Justice; and so conscious were they of the Guilt which they had contracted, that even the Sight of their own Shadows would terrify and confound them; and every Object they beheld appeared, to their distracted and discomposed Imaginations, as horrible and ghastly as the most formidable Spectre.

The Emperor *Caligula*, if we may credit *Suetonius*, would pour out his Invectives against Heaven itself, if it happen'd but to rain, so as to disappoint him in the Enjoyment of the usual Diversions of the Theatre; yet such a Coward was this mighty Blusterer, that when he heard the awful Thunder rowl along the Sky, or saw the forked Lightning dart down from thence, he would hide his Face with all the Signs of Horror and Amazement, and fly for Shelter to his Bed. And *Seneca*, speaking of the same Person, intimates, that his inordinate Passion was, in his Opinion, the chief natural Cause of his Death; when his Subjects grew rebellious, and murmured at the tyrannical Impositions of One, who scorned to acknowledge himself under the least Subjection to the Gods themselves.

Though

That there is a Supreme Being.

15

SERM.

II.

Though many of the Philosophers took greater Liberties than became them, in regard to the Deity, yet we find but few profess'd Atheists recorded in the Annals of the Ancients; and even they, rather exposed the numerous Train of false Deities, than denied the Existence of the true God: As, many among us content themselves with knowing what is false, without inquiring what is true; and ridicule Superstition, without examining into the merits of their most holy Religion.

The Scepticks were the only Persons who professedly suspended their Assent to the Being of a God. But those senseless stupid Wretches ought to be below our Regard; since they doubted even of what is true to a Demonstration, both of what they saw, and felt, and of their very Being itself, in Opposition to the loud Voice of universal Nature, to what was adored by the thoughtless Vulgar, and revered by the most judicious Philosophers.

Our modern Scepticks talk much in the same trifling Strain. How, say they, can we acknowledge a God, when we never saw him? Ridiculous! Do not you, tho' blind, or in a Dungeon, believe there is a Sun? And, when God is to be seen in every Pile of Grass, or Atom of Dust, can you doubt of his Existence? Do you not, on the first Sight of a Tree, naturally suppose it has a Root, tho' the Earth covers it? Do you not trace a River to its Head, tho' never so distant from it? Suppose you were travelling through some Desert in *India*, and in your Progress should cast your Eyes on a regular Cottage, would you not readily infer, that the Place had once been inhabited, from the visible Marks of human Contrivance? And, when you take a Survey of a Multiplicity of Objects, surpassing the most exalted Conceptions

SERM. Conceptions of Men, must you not conclude,

II. *^a This is the Lord's Doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes?* How many Things do we firmly believe, which we do not see? Don't we allow, that Plants and Animals have, if I may be indulged the Expression, a Sort of Souls, tho' we cannot discover their hidden Qualities and Originals; that we ourselves have a rational Faculty, whereby we contemplate both on ourselves and Fellow-creatures? Now, since both the external and internal Parts of the Body are the same after Death as they were before, where is the Soul? Where did you see it? If in its Effects, in that Sense we see God. You discern nothing but with your Eyes, and by the Influence of your Soul, which is of too refined a Nature, to be discerned by human Sight. You believe you have a Face, yet you can only see the Reflection of it in a Glass; and will you not believe there is a God, the bright Characters of whose Divinity are so legible, in the various and inimitable Works of the Creation?

Here I shall conclude; for tho' I am very sensible infinitely more might be said on this Subject, yet I am convinced the subtlest and most hardened Infidel will never be able to evade the Force of one Half of the Arguments which I have produced to prove there is a Supreme Being; and tho' 'tis possible, I may have said nothing new upon the Subject, yet, if I have but removed the least Doubt, or, if I have persuaded any one Person, who before was too incurious, to reflect seriously on this important Truth; sure I am, I have taken a great Step towards persuading him to lead an upright and a holy Life; since 'tis as easy to de-

^a Psalm cxviii. 23.

monstrate, that God will be a Rewarder of the Just, SERM.
and a Punisher of the Wicked, as that he really II.
exists; which Truth I flatter myself I have put
beyond the Reach of all Contradiction.

Now therefore let us join with the Learned and
Unlearned, Men and Brutes, animate and inani-
mate Creatures, the Universe, and each Part of
it, in acknowledging a Supreme Being: And, if
any One still doubts of this momentous Truth,
endeavouring not only to banish God, but even
common Sense and Reason, out of the World;
let us appeal to his own Conscience, which I am
sure he cannot wholly stifle, whether he stands not
self-condemned.



C

SERMON

SERMON III.

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

PSALM XIV. latter Part of Ver. 1.

They are corrupt; they have done abominable Works; there is none that doeth Good.

SERM.
III.

THE whole Verse runs thus: *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God: They are corrupt; they have done abominable Works; there is none that doeth Good.* The Psalmist having in the Beginning of this Verse asserted, that there were Men so blind and foolish, as to deny the Being of a God, tells us, in the latter Part, what Sort of Men those were: *They were corrupt; they had done abominable Works; there were none that did Good.* The Paraphrase of this Verse may run thus: “ This
“ wicked Nation (*speaking of the Jews*) is now
“ made up of such, as have cast off all Fear, and
“ Care, and even Acknowledgement of God:
“ whatsoever they do with their Mouths, which
“ perhaps are not let loose to that Boldness, their
“ Actions, as far as they are Interpreters of their
“ Thoughts, evidence an Atheistical Principle of
“ Belief within them, that God hath not the go-
“ verning and judging of the Doings of Men; for
“ such are their Dealings, so false, so detestable,
“ and so universally such, that a Man cannot
“ judgè more favourably of them, than that they
“ never

* Dr. Hammond's Paraphrase upon the Text.

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

19

“ never expect to be accountable to God for what they do.” Or, in more direct Terms, that they persuade themselves, that there is no God to call them to Account. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God: They are corrupt; they have done abominable Works; there is none that doeth Good.*

SERM.

III.

In my last Discourse, on the former Part of this Verse, I have proved, I hope, to the Conviction of my Hearers, *that there is a Supreme Being*; it may not be an improper Sequel therefore to shew, that all such, as are corrupt, as indulge themselves in all manner of Licentiousness, are at least equally bad, if not worse than those, who openly deny the Existence of a God; since the Actions of such Men bring a Reproach upon the Religion they profess, whatever it be. If the Speculative Atheist is a most despicable Creature, the Practical One is doubtless worse: The former dishonours God with his Mouth; the latter, with all the Powers and Faculties of his Soul and Body. But before I proceed, it may be necessary to explain what I mean by the Practical Atheist; for, 'tis possible, some may cavil at the Term, as not corresponding, with sufficient Aptness, in every Respect, to the Person, whose Folly, or rather Madness, I am about to expose.

The Practical Atheist then is One, who altho' he may possibly profess the Belief of a God, and some other general Truths, which are the natural Result of such a Declaration, yet gives a Loose to his inordinate Lusts and Passions, and lives in the constant Breach of almost every Commandment: In short, we may rank under this Denomination every One, who lives in an uninterrupted Course of Sin and Impiety; for such Men could never live as they do, did they in Reality believe; and that they do not believe, is principally owing to their

SERM. Want of Reflection. These will oftentimes attend the publick Worship, 'tis true; but then they look upon it as a Matter of Form only, where they pray without either Hope or Fear; and should they chance to hear their Character, and their deplorable State and Condition described in the most pathetic Terms; their Danger made ever so apparent; eternal Happiness, or eternal Misery proposed to them with the warmest Zeal; they'll cry, with a Smile perhaps, *A mighty good Discourse!* but, at the same time, determine with themselves to reap no Advantage from it. If we may pass any Judgment from the Conduct of Mankind in general, but very few, I fear, will escape this Censure. Let us look round about us, and what does the gloomy Prospect afford, but Murders, Adulteries, Blasphemies, Thefts, and such a black Catalogue of Crimes, as, when set in their proper Light, would make any sober and serious Christian shudder with Horror, and almost wish to lead the Life of an Anchorite, rather than mingle with such an abandoned Herd? I am not insensible, that Remonstrances of this kind are deemed Things of Course from the Pulpit, and, as such, too little regarded; but every One, who is not wilfully blind, must be convinced of the Truth of them. And tho' we should allow, that the Generality of Mankind are not guilty of what we call enormous Crimes, yet how few are there, who walk with Delight in the Paths of Virtue! Where shall we find the Man, that is wholly devoted to the Service of his Maker? One, that is no ways addicted to the reigning Vices of the Age; that is truly just and honest in all his Dealings; that abhors Tyranny and Oppression, and scorns to take Advantage of his Neighbour's Necessity, or, for any Consideration whatsoever, to defraud him of his Due;

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

21

Due; who, in short, in every Action of his Life, SERM.
III.
will do that to Others, which he would be desirous they should do to Him? I am afraid there are very few such righteous Persons to be found; and would to God, this were only a bare Suspicion! But I am apt to believe, that our own Consciences would accuse the greatest Part of us; at least each One in his Heart would condemn his Neighbour. Could this be the real State of Things, did Men sincerely believe the Truth of their most holy Religion? I think they could not; 'tis our indispensable Duty, therefore, tho' Experience shews how little Success we meet with in such Attempts, to hold a Glass to Mens Consciences, and shew them the Deformity of their Souls, and the Danger of that everlasting Perdition which lies before them. Had we no more to do, than to tell Men what is their Duty, the Task would not be hard; for the Sacred Scriptures are very clear and obvious in that Particular; but to persuade Men to follow, with a willing Mind, those unerring Guides, is an Attempt, I fear, too arduous and difficult to be accomplished: Should our utmost Endeavours, however, but call one Sinner to Repentance, we shall not lose our Reward.

That I may contribute what little is in my Power towards the Attainment of so valuable an End, I shall beg your serious Attention, whilst I lay before you, not only the Hazard, but the Folly of Practical Atheism.

Tho' every One here present will, I doubt not, very readily declare, that he believes there is a God, who will hereafter reward the Just, and punish the Wicked; yet, upon a strict Examination, 'tis to be feared, that too many will find, they only say so, because they have been accu-

SERM. stomed to such a Concession from their Infancy ;

III. and that bare Acknowledgment has been all ; for perhaps they never bestowed one serious Thought about it ; and, as they imbibed those Notions upon the Credit of others, never gave themselves the Trouble to examine into the Truth or Falshood of them ; but sitting down contented with passing for nominal Christians, pursue their Vices without the least Reluctance or Controul ; and whether they shall live hereafter, or not, and how it will fare with them, when this World shall pass away, are Articles, which they never concerned themselves about. Now, can any Man be said properly to believe a Thing, of which he has only heard some imperfect Account, and that too with so much Coldness and Indifference, as not to think it worth his Care, to inquire into the Reality of the Fact ? No surely ! For to believe, we must have all the Evidence that the Nature of the Thing will bear : 'Tis no unnatural Assertion therefore, to say, that the true Reason why Men do not reform their Lives, is, because their Belief is unsettled : For is it credible, that such Numbers could have the least Apprehension of leaving this World in a few Years, for a State of the most consummate Misery, and yet be easy, whilst they are running headlong into so deplorable a State ? I would ask any Man, did he believe, that the House he lived in would, in a few Years, be consumed by Fire, and that he should inevitably perish in the Flames, unless he was continually upon his guard, and used his utmost Endeavours to prevent such a Misfortune, whether this would not make him for ever uneasy ? Whether he would not exert himself to the last Degree, in hopes to avoid so deplorable a Fate ? And whether he would not esteem that Person as his dearest Friend, who

who should point out to him an infallible Method SERM.
to preserve him from such Destruction? If then III.
the greatest Care is thought too little to secure us
from temporal Calamities, how much more will
the sincere Believer do to skreen himself from the
Wrath of an offended and Almighty God? 'Tis
therefore plain to me, and must, upon the least
Consideration, be so to every One, that either those,
who live in a constant Course of Sin, do not be-
lieve; or else, that they must be to the last Degree
presumptuous, mad, and foolish. Now I am
charitable enough to think, that the Want of
Consideration is the principal Cause, and the best
Reason that can be given, why so many in these
Times fall into Practical Atheism. I would
therefore advise such a Set of unthinking Men to
recollect, that their Security and Ease will never
quench the Torments of Hell; and, as a very little
Reflection will convince them that there is such
a Place, they will experience the intolerable Pains
of it, when 'tis too late to repent: And if a severe
Fit of the Gout, or Stone, be such agonizing
Pain; if Poverty and Contempt prove such in-
supportable Burthens, that Men have preferred
Death, with all its Horrors, rather than endure
them; think, Oh! timely think, what Torments
the Wrath of a justly offended God will produce!

As a convincing Proof of the Truth of these
Reflections, let us look back to the Infancy of
Christianity, and we shall find almost incredible
Numbers, so firmly persuaded of the Being of a
God, as to forego, not only all the alluring Plea-
sures that the whole World could afford them,
but Life itself, with the nobler Prospect of an
ever blessed Immortality. These Christian He-
roes, before their Conversion, reflected as little,
perhaps, on a Future State, and were as remiss, as

SERM. the Generality of Mankind are at present; but
 III. Truth is so prevailing, that we need only shew it,
 in order to convince the most Obdurate. Now,
 what exalted Ideas of God's Goodness, and awful
 Fears of his Displeasure, must possess the Souls
 of those, who, to purchase his Favour, patiently
 endured the severest Tortures that the Cruelty of
 Man could possibly devise; who, when they were
 beheaded, burnt, flead, or sawn asunder, rejoiced
 that they were thought worthy to suffer. These
 Considerations, duly weighed, will surely rouse us
 from our Lethargy; and, as they so nearly con-
 cern us, must undoubtedly prompt us to examine
 whether they be true or false; and, I am fully
 persuaded, if once we set heartily about such an
 important Inquiry, and use all possible Means to
 succeed in it, we shall first of all be convinced of
 our Danger; and then, unless we are stupid and
 insensible to the last Degree, shall cry out, as the
 Converts of old did to the Apostles, *Sirs, what
 must we do to be saved?*

I hope the few cursory Reflections which I have
 offered to you at this time, are sufficient to con-
 vince you of the Danger and Folly of Practical
 Atheism; I propose therefore, in the next place,
 to inquire how it happens, that Men are so care-
 less and remiss in a Point of such Importance, and
 where their future Felicity is so nearly concerned.
 The Source of this unhappy Security and Indo-
 lence, in Affairs relating to another World, I take
 to be the little Care which Parents and Masters
 take to instill betimes into the Minds of Youth the
 Principles of their most holy Religion. I shall
 therefore beg Leave to make a few Reflections on
 this Subject, and shew the ill Consequences, both

as

as to their spiritual and temporal Welfare, that SERM.
attend such a shameful Neglect. III.

I shall then (by way of Application) represent to you the Anguish and Remorse which the Practical Atheist must experience, when overtaken by a violent Fit of Sickness, or overwhelmed with the Infirmities of old Age; and, on the other hand, the Joy which the virtuous Man possesses in the last Stage of his Life, when he finds Death making his gentle Approaches towards him.

To begin with the Source, or first Cause of Practical Atheism, I mean the Mistakes into which too many run, with regard to the Education of their Children.

Before I enter upon this Article, I think it necessary to premise, that I have no Intention to instruct those, who make it their Delight, as well as Profession, to train up Youth in the Paths of Virtue; especially those, whose Years and Experience render such an Attempt not only needless, but impertinent; on the contrary, I should rejoice to receive Information from them; and indeed I have heard some of them discourse on this Topick to my no small Satisfaction and Advantage. What I have to offer at this time will consist chiefly of a few general Observations, in which I shall address myself in a more particular Manner to Parents; since the Negligence of such near Relations may render the Labours even of the most skilful Masters ineffectual.

He, who has the Welfare of his Child at Heart, will not think all the Pains he can possibly take, in order to procure any valuable Blessing for him, too great. The most Profligate and Abandoned seldom are insensible of that Tenderness for their Offspring, which the infinite Wisdom of God has so strongly impressed upon the Heart of Man. I
would

26. *The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.*

SERM. would therefore offer the following Reflections to the
 III. Consideration of those, who have the least Regard
 for the present or future Happiness of their Children.

Every One must allow, that the Prejudices we imbibe, or the evil Habits we contract, in our Infancy, and younger Years, are very difficult at least, if not impossible, to remove; that those, who have had the Happiness of a virtuous and liberal Education, tho' they should for a Time be carried away by the Fire of Youth, or the Violence of any Temptation, yet they very seldom continue long in so unfortunate a Course; the virtuous Principles they received in their Childhood will, in every sober Hour, revive and reproach them, as it were, for their ill Conduct; and it has been often observed, that, after a short Struggle, Virtue has gained the Victory, and they have followed her Paths with more Eagerness and Delight than ever. On the other hand, those, whose Parents have not only neglected them in their early Days, but by their own bad Examples have encouraged, and cherished their Dispositions to Evil; if ever it should so happen, as I believe it very rarely does, that they are awakened to a Sense of their Danger, and resolve to seek the Ways of Wisdom and Truth; how hard is the Conflict! How liable are they to be overcome by every Temptation that is laid before them! I might likewise add, that since Man's unhappy Fall, we are by Nature more prone to Vice, than Virtue. Parents therefore ought to undertake the Task of forming the Minds of their Children betimes; their Care ought to begin at the very Cradle, or, at least, as soon as they are capable of making any Reflections.

We very justly call those Times when the Light of the Gospel was hid from the World, the Days
 of

of Ignorance and Darkneſs; and we may with SERM. great Reason rejoice in ſo invaluable a Bleſſing. as III. the Knowledge of the true God, and the certain Methods of attaining his Favour, and thereby procuring to ourſelves an Heavenly Inheritance. We can likewiſe add to theſe Privileges the moſt perfect Morality, and the beſt Rules for the Direction of our Conduct throughout the whole Courſe of our Lives: We have not only the Advantage of the Labours of all the Philoſophers, but their Errors and Miſtakes amended, and ſuch Improvements, as all their boaſted Wiſdom could never attain. Since this is the Caſe, and ſince we have ſo many Helps and Guides, which they wanted, would it not be the greateſt Diſgrace imaginable to us, ſhould we yield to them either in Wiſdom, Prudence or Virtue? Should we not, on the contrary, be ſtirred up to imitate, to excell them in every praiſe-worthy Undertaking? It may be no unprofitable Amuſement therefore, in this Place, to give Chriſtian Parents a tranſient View of the more than common Pains which the Heathens themſelves took in ſo important an Affair, as the Regulation of their Children.

⁊ Their firſt Concern was to procure ſuch Servants for their Attendants, as were eſteemed Perſons of Sobriety and good Morals. They looked upon the Neglect of Parents to preſerve and cultivate in their Children the ineſtimable Treſure of Modeſty, as the Origin of all Diſorders. That ſoft and effeminate Method of Education, which too many are fond of, they deſpiſed; ſince it only tends to enervate at once both the Body and the Mind. They gave a ſevere Check to all idle and looſe Diſcourſe, and ſuffered no bad Examples to be ſet before them, leſt being habituated to ſuch Sightſ, they

SERM. they should lose that Abhorrence of Vice, which
 III. should be implanted in them, and contract ill
 Habits before Experience could evince the Danger
 that attended them. They took great Pains to sub-
 due their Passions betimes, and made every thing
 subservient to the Promotion of Virtue. Instead
 of light and trivial Sentences, none were offered
 for their Imitation, but such as contained some
 moral Precept, and the Sayings of the wisest Men
 were taught them by way of Amusement; and
 this Method was the rather observed, because the
 Memory easily retains such Lessons of Instruction,
 and the good Effects of them often extend even to
 old Age. They were likewise shewn in their In-
 fancy the Benefits and Pleasures of Temperance;
 and the noblest Families were solicitous to have
 their Children betimes inured to Hardships and
 Fatigues. They were industrious to instill into
 them an early Veneration for Truth: A Lye was
 deemed most odious, and a Fraud, however dex-
 terously managed, looked upon as a black and
 enormous Crime. Their Aversion to all Kinds of
 Intemperance, was no less remarkable; they ex-
 posed their Slaves, when disguised by Liquor, to
 the Derision of their Youth, in order to implant
 in them an early Detestation of that Vice. The
 Food allowed to their Children and young Men
 was nothing but Bread, Cresses, and Water, to
 accustom them to Abstinence and Sobriety: They
 considered, that a plain, frugal Diet would invi-
 gorate the Body, and cause them to be sprightly
 and healthful. Boys were not only instructed,
 whilst at School, in the Arts and Sciences, but in
 the Principles of Justice and Virtue; even there
 they learned to reverence the Gods; to be obedient
 to their Parents and Superiors; and no Crime was
 so severely punished among them, as Ingratitude.

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

29

SERM.
III.

It would take up much more time than is allowed me at present, to enumerate the various Methods the Heathens took to form such a Number of brave Soldiers, worthy Citizens, and venerable Philosophers.

Notwithstanding these Eulogiums have so specious an Appearance, I might be thought too partial to them, were I to omit observing, that, when we come to set their Views in a fair and impartial Light, we shall find, that their Virtues were the Result only of Ambition, and that they looked chiefly for their Reward in this World. If then such narrow Motives had such glorious Consequences; if Sobriety, Temperance, Chastity, Generosity, Prudence and Humility were so diligently cultivated, even by those, who had little Expectations from another Life; if they profited so largely under their Philosophers and Teachers, whose very Knowledge was dark and confused; what ought not to be expected from us, who have the most perfect Morality, the most divine Precepts, and the ever glorious Example of our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*? What Fruits ought we to produce, who expect so glorious an Harvest in another World, as is promised in the Sacred Scriptures; and moreover have our Knowledge enlightened by the inexpressible Brightness of the Gospel? Who, that hears what Advantages we have over them, would not readily conclude, we must excell those admired Heathens in the Purity of our Lives and Conversations? Who, that sees our daily Practices, would not readily allow, they would be a Scandal to the darkest Ages of Idolatry and Ignorance?

From what has been said, it very naturally follows, that we return to the Subject we set out with, namely the Source of this ill Behaviour amongst Men, who profess and call themselves Christians.

Not

SERM.

III.

Not to dissemble the Matter therefore, the strange Neglect of Parents is the first, if not the only Cause of these Evils. How common is it for them to indulge their Children in every Kind of Pleasure; to talk, without Reserve, and perhaps wickedly too, before them on any Subject; to shew a Sort of Contempt for religious Mysteries; to be drunken in their Presence? And, if all this doth not happen, how few take the necessary Precautions to instill into their Minds betimes the Principles of Virtue and Religion? How many, on the contrary, are fond of cherishing in them the Seeds of Vice and Folly? Evils of this Kind are so common, that I may leave it to every Man's Conscience to tell him how blame-worthy he has been in this Particular, and hasten to shew the fatal Consequences of such wrong Proceedings. Can we wonder, if Children, who have been inured to hear, not only Religion itself, but its Votaries and their Places of divine Worship treated with Indifference, and perhaps with Contempt, should be attached to all sensual Enjoyments? Can we be surpris'd, if they become Wine-Bibbers and profane Swearers, when they have always had such bad Examples before their Eyes? On the contrary, would it not be a Matter of Wonder, should they prove otherwise? Can we expect a plentiful Harvest, when we have neglected to cultivate our Grounds? Have we any Reason to hope for delicious Fruits, where we have only sown Thorns and Briars? Should we not think him a Fool or a Madman, that attempts to raise a noble and spacious Edifice on a rotten, or sandy Foundation? And is it less absurd, to expect a Youth to be virtuous, who has been early instructed in the Paths of Vice? Is it any longer therefore a Matter of Astonishment, that Men should be Practical Atheists, who never have

have been taught to think seriously on that awful SERM.
Being, who made Heaven and Earth? Why should III.
we think it strange, that they should call them-
selves Christians, though their daily Practices most
notoriously give the Lye to their Profession; since
their Fathers bore that Denomination, and yet led
as abandoned Lives as themselves: or say they did
not; yet they taught them but little more of their
Religion, than formally to say, that they believed.
They have been accustomed moreover to see their
Neighbours round about them practise the same
easy Religion; and it is possible, they would be
ashamed to be even thought less daring, or more
religious, than their indolent Elders. What shall
we say? When Men are thus grown up, and con-
firmed in this unhappy Security, and their Under-
standings perhaps upon a Level with their Educa-
tion, it is no Wonder, if any Arguments, how
weak soever, will have Weight enough to persuade
them, that God will not call them to account for
this abominable Luke-warmness: But should their
Practices, as is too often the Case, be extremely
wicked and unjust, they will then be inclined to
hope, that there is no God. And surely, no State
on Earth can be more miserable than his, who has
lived to fear there is a God; to dread there may
be Torments, and to hope that those inexpressible
Joys, which the Gospel promises, are only fond
Chimeras.

That few give themselves any real Concern
about their immortal Souls, is a very melancholy
but incontestible Truth. Vice, indeed, has at
all Times had her Votaries, but now she almost
seems to dispute the Government of the World
with Virtue. I appeal to those, who have made
any Observation of these Things, and more espe-
cially to the elderly Part of my Congregation;

was

SERM. was ever Luxury carried to such an amazing Pitch,
III. as it is at present? Are not Mens Minds enervated
 with a Love of Ease and Pleasure? Did ever Men
 so openly and audaciously practise Vice and Im-
 morality? Were there ever known such Numbers
 of Atheists and Unbelievers? If then Vice seems
 at these Times so formidable, what a Prospect do
 the Times to come afford? What Devils do those
 promise to be, who now are Children? Since, in
 their infant Years, every Town, every Street, and
 almost every House is witness of their blaspheming
 the Name of God, and invoking the Powers of Hell
 in Curses upon themselves and their Companions,
 You all know this to be Truth; ye cannot chuse
 but hear them before your Doors, in your Mar-
 kets, and even in your very Churches. Ye Pa-
 rents! ye Masters! it is your Neglect, that is the
 fatal Cause of all these Evils: Evils, which Chil-
 dren yet unborn will have Reason to lament. If
 therefore you have any Desire of Praise, any Hopes
 of Contentment here, or Happiness hereafter; if
 you have any Regard for the Honour of your Na-
 tive Country, or the least Bowels of Compassion
 for your yet innocent Children; think on these
 Things: Take the utmost Care to train them up
 to Virtue; to cherish every generous Sentiment,
 and raise in them an ardent Zeal for the Glory of
 God, and our most holy Religion. As none are
 without, let me beg of you industriously to con-
 ceal your own Failings, lest your Children also fall;
 for this, if it can be called one, is a commendable
 and praise worthy Deceit: The more virtuous they
 believe you to be, the more Respect and Tender-
 ness you will experience from them. As a far-
 ther Motive for your being active in the Reforma-
 tion of the Youth entrusted to your Care; it may
 be worth your while to consider, that you are lay-
 ing

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

33

SERM.

III.

ing up for yourselves Joy and Comfort even in this World, and procuring for Posterity invaluable Advantages. For surely no Blessing can be greater to private Persons, than dutiful and virtuous Children; no Advantage more solid to any Nation or Community, than a Succession of virtuous Members.

Though I have been purposely very short in the Pursuit of my Subject, namely, The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism, yet I hope I have said enough to convince any one, *First*, that there are infinite Numbers so unhappy, as to be wholly incurious and indifferent about the Truth or Falseness of the Religion they profess. *Secondly*, that their Indolence will not prevent their being eternally miserable; and that, unless they diligently seek the Lord, they may expect to feel the Weight of his just Resentment and Displeasure. *Thirdly*, that so many would not have fallen into this dreadful Mistake, had their Parents taken a proper Care of their Education. *Fourthly*, that the Heathens were very industrious to cherish every Virtue in their Children; and that therefore more is required from the Christian, because he has greater Advantages, far better Lessons of Instruction, and more glorious Views, namely, the Light of the Sacred Scriptures, and the Joys of Heaven. And *Lastly*, I shewed how few seriously consider these Things, and the ill Consequences that attended such a Neglect; concluding with some Arguments in order to persuade every one to make a Reformation at Home. It now remains, by way of Application, that I represent to you, the Anguish and Remorse which the Practical Atheist must experience in a violent Fit of Sickness; or, if he lives long enough, in the Sorrow and Infirmities of old Age. And, on the contrary, the Joy the virtuous Man possesses in the latter Stages of his Life,

D

or

SERM. or when he finds Death, making his gentle Ap-
 III. proaches.

Human Nature is subject to so many Accidents and Misfortunes, that it has been very justly insisted upon, that no Man was ever compleatly happy in this Life. But surely the Reflections which will per-force obtrude upon a wicked Man, when sorely oppressed, and conscious that his own ill Conduct has brought his Misfortunes upon him, will make the Weight of them more intolerable. Image to yourselves a Man weakened by Intemperance, reduced almost to the last Extremity, one who feels the violent Burning of a distempered Blood, who imagines himself upon the Brink of the Grave, and going to experience the Wrath of a God, whose Laws he has violated and despised. At such a Time as this, Conscience will be heard, and his Crimes will then appear in their true Light. Every Thing about him will then turn to his Disquiet; he will perhaps observe his Friends look with Unconcern for his Sufferings: He is conscious how undeserving he has been, and therefore is not the last to discover what a secret Joy dawns in every Face, proceeding from the Hopes that they are soon to be freed from a Wretch, whose ill Conduct has involved them in many Troubles. His Children, whose Education, it is most probable, has been suited to their Father's Morals, or, at least, upon whom his bad Example has had too melancholy an Effect, see the Condition to which he is reduced with Pleasure; forasmuch as wicked and licentious Minds have very few Touches of Humanity. How uneasy must such his temporal Condition make him? Every Thing that can happen appears in the worst Light to him at one View; his Relations and Neighbours despising his Memory, and rejoicing at his Death;

his

The Danger and Folly of Practical Atheism.

35

SERM.
III.

his Children sharing his Fortunes, as it were the Spoils of some Enemy, and rioting even over his Grave:—Natural Affection too will perhaps point out to him, that his false Indulgence, his pernicious Counsels, and more especially his bad Example, has procured the Ruin, the eternal Ruin, of those, whose Welfare ought to have been his chief Concern. We find the rich Man in Hell, according to the Parable, sensible when too late of this Evil, and intreating *Abraham* to prevent his Brethren from falling into the same dreadful Judgment as himself. The same Remorse may seize the wicked Man on this side his Death, and how great will his Disquiet be, in that he was not sensible of his fatal Conduct, till the Time was at hand, when it was too late to apply a Remedy. If then these his earthly Affairs will at such a Time be so irksome and grievous to him, what must the Prospect of Eternity afford him?—Intolerable Punishments; unspeakable Torments; an offended, and avenging God. All crowd upon his Soul, and give him up a Prey to the most dreadful Despair. Though these Things are too shocking to be thought of, yet, that they are the most sure Consequences of Vice, all must be sensible, who have ever attended the last Hours of the Wicked. How great are their Agonies? How inexpressible the gloomy Thoughts that crowd upon them? How often do we hear them, in the Bitterness of their Souls, cry out—There is no Mercy for me!—God hath forsaken me!—He will not hear! The Torments of Hell are preparing for me! I feel there is a God! I shall soon be driven into intolerable Torments!—Such Exclamations are not uncommon upon a sick Bed; and it is wonderful, the Standers-by should not be more deeply affected with them, than they generally are. But you

SERM.

III.

will say perhaps, this is only the Case with the desperately Wicked; we have never been guilty of Crimes black enough to occasion such deep Despair. Ah! let not such a flattering Notion lull your Souls in deep Security: It is not enough we are not wicked; if we hope for Life and Happiness, we must be virtuous. It is not enough, that with a cold Air and Indifference we attend the Church of God; but we must likewise diligently practise his Commands, and seek him with Zeal and Warmth; or else we may fatally feel the Terrors of his Wrath. Remember! he not only punishes the Workers of Iniquity, but has himself assured us, that the slothful Servant shall be hurried to dreadful Darkness, * *where will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth.*

But say, should the wicked, the slothful, the careless Sinner live to grow in Years; what Child reveres him? With how much Contempt is he treated even by his wicked Companions? Who covets his Friendship? Who does not despise his Company? A Foolish old Man is certainly a most contemptible Creature, but a wicked one is the Shame of Mankind. How ill suits all Manner of Intemperance with Age? Such Behaviour will stifle all Kindness in Friends, Charity in Neighbours, and Duty in Children: He falls into the Grave, and, it is to be feared, into eternal Torment too, unpitied and despised; and the greatest Happiness that could befall such a Man would be to perish like the Brutes, and have his very Name buried in Oblivion.

How different is the Fate of the wise and virtuous Man? His Children regard him, as their dearest Benefactor, their truest Friend; they are ready

ready to assist him with all the Cheerfulness imaginable, and try every Expedient in their Power to prolong his Life, and render it pleasant and agreeable. His Neighbours court his Acquaintance, rejoice in the Prosperity of his Family, and are ready to testify upon all Occasions their Approbation of his Conduct. Virtue adds such an inexpressible Sweetness to old Age, that no State of Life, in my Opinion, ought so much to be envied.—But to proceed; when that Life, which he has so happily prolonged by his Temperance and Sobriety, is so far weakened, as to warn him of his approaching Dissolution; how calmly does he wait the Almighty's Pleasure? His Soul being secure in the gracious Promises of the Gospel, the nearer she approaches the Borders of Death, is the more eager for Immortality, and feels the greater Longings after Happiness: At the Hour of Death, he resigns this transitory World with Delight, and his Soul, full of the awful Ideas of God's Justice, with the strongest Assurances of his inexpressible Mercy and Goodness, sinks calmly into everlasting Bliss.

To conclude; let us all, not only agree in the Truth of these Things, but seriously resolve to make a diligent Enquiry after eternal Happiness, and pray incessantly the Almighty to give Success to our Endeavours. Let us shew that we believe, by our Works; and, as a very little Consideration will assure us there is a Supreme Being, let us act as those, who fear his Displeasure, dread his Wrath, and trust only in his Mercy.

To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Might, Majesty and Dominion, both now and for ever. Amen.

S E R M O N IV.

A Future State demonstrated, from the
Nature of the Soul.

ACTS xxiii. Ver. 8.

*The Sadducees say, That there is no Resurrec-
tion, neither Angel nor Spirit.*

SERM.
IV.

TIS an obvious Remark, but a very just one, that tho' an Opinion be never so absurd, there are always some Advocates, some Persons credulous and weak enough to espouse and defend it: This is so apparent a Truth, that it would be needless to produce any Arguments to prove it, since the Variety of idle and foolish Notions that at present find Credit in the World, will sufficiently justify the Assertion. With how much Warmth are the Fictions and Miracles of the Church of Rome maintain'd as real Facts, and how firmly are they credited by the bigotted Papist? What absurd and wicked Principles are held as the Sacred Mandates of Heaven, by the blind Adorers of *Mahomet*? And what wild and extravagant Fancies have led the barbarous Heathen astray? Nay, even in this very Nation, where the Light of the Gospel shines so clearly, in a Church so truly reform'd as ours is, there have not been wanting Wretches profligate enough to teach for the Doctrines of God the Commandments of Men. But of all the wicked and absurd Opinions that Mankind ever gave into, none are more monstrous,
none

none of a more destructive Tendency, than That of **SERM.**
the *Sadducees*, who say, *That there is no Resurrec-* **IV.**
tion, neither Angel nor Spirit: Or, in other Words,
"That there is * no Life after This; no immortal
" Spirit, nor Soul of Man, subsisting without a
" Body."

Man has such a Thirst after Immortality im-
planted in his Nature, that there can be no greater
Testimony of a sordid and groveling Disposition,
than to give into such an abject, mean-spirited
Opinion, and to take Pride in producing a few
weak and sophistical Arguments against the Voice
of Nature, and the general Consent of all Man-
kind. The bare Supposition of our falling into
Nought, is a severe Satire upon Human Nature.
Could the *Sadducee* persuade the World into his
Opinion, what would the Event be, but the Dis-
solution of all Harmony and Friendship, and every
social Virtue? What would restrain the Murderer
from his horrid Purposes, the Robber from his
Plunder, or the Adulterer from his Neighbour's
Bed? Would not every thing be right that con-
duced to our passing this short Life as jovially and
gayly as we could? Would not Human Laws be
evaded, and presently fall to Nothing? For every
one would then pursue his own private Interest,
without any Regard or Concern for his Neigh-
bour: And should this be the Case, how deplorable
the Condition of Mankind would inevitably be, a
very little Consideration will suggest. But suppose
we should allow Mankind might be restrain'd, and
kept in Order by wholesome Laws, and that a
Way could be found out to make those Laws
strictly observed; yet such a Scheme, as that of
the *Sadducees*, would be destructive of all private
D 4 Felicity.

SERM.

IV.

B

Felicity. Those who were possess'd of the largest Share of Fortune's Favours, might justly murmur and repine, and be uneasy at the Thought of their approaching Loss; and what a poor Consolation would it be to the unhappy and indigent Wretch, to reflect, that from being miserable, he is hastening to be Nothing? In short, the *Sadducee* vilifies Mankind, dissolves the strongest Bands of Society, gives a severe Check to private Felicity, and would endeavour to persuade Men into the Belief of a Thing, which, should they be mistaken, as undoubtedly they are, will involve their ill-judging Followers into an Eternity of Misery; a woeful and irreparable Mistake! But I am persuaded no one would entertain a Thought of perishing like the Brutes, but those only who delight to live as such; and none but the most Profligate and Abandon'd will join with the *Sadducee*, and say, *There is no Life after This.*

I am very sensible, that what I have hitherto advanced, is no Argument against their Assertion; for many Things may be disagreeable and inconvenient, that may notwithstanding be real Facts; but I was willing, by way of Preface, to shew how distasteful such a Doctrine would be, even tho' it were true, in order to engage your Attention to the Arguments I shall produce, in order to demonstrate that it is false.

To reduce what I have to say into some Method, I shall endeavour to shew, That many very useful and powerful Arguments for a Future State may be deduced,

1. *First*, From the Nature of the Soul,

2. *Secondly*, From the Miseries of this Life; and the unequal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments. And,

3. *Lastly*, From the universal Consent of Mankind,

First,

from the Nature of the Soul.

41

First, I am to shew, That very useful and powerful Arguments for a Future State may be collected, from the Nature of the Soul. And here, SERM.
IV.
If contrary to my Inclination and Design, I should advance any Thing above the Comprehension of the Unlearned Part of my Hearers, I have this to offer in my Favour, that I must have been silent on one of the most convincing and satisfactory Evidences of a Future State, had I left the Nature of the Soul intirely unexamined. I shall, however, be as plain in this Particular as my Subject will permit; and I hope the greater Part of my Hearers will feel the Force of my Arguments, which I am satisfied will be convincing, should I prove but so happy as to set them in a clear and advantageous Light. But be that as it will, I have collected additional Arguments of another Sort, which are obvious to the meanest Capacities, and sufficient to convince any unprejudiced and well-disposed Mind of this important Truth; so that those that cannot relish one Part of my Discourse, may reap some Satisfaction and Improvement from the other.

Reason demonstrates to us, that God is a *Spirit*; and *Sense*, that the World is *Matter*. *Man*, that *Microcosm*, or little World, as he is called, is an Epitome of both; of the *former*, with respect to his *Soul*; and of the *latter*, in regard to his *Body*; the Creator being pleased, in this his Master-piece, to contract, if I may be allowed the Expression, his own infinite Majesty, and this vast Machine into a narrow Compass. In the Body of Man we may clearly observe a surprising Compound of the four Elements: His Veins, like Rivers, run to the most extreme Parts of every Member.

A Future State demonstrated,

SECT. IV. Member. The Organs of his Sense are as various, as there are a Variety of sensible Objects to entertain them. Numberless are his Nerves, Arteries, and Ligaments: His Head, by special Privilege, is erected towards Heaven, and his Hands are adapted for the most regular and useful Motions. Now, was any one to view such a Structure as this, even without Life, Sense, or Motion, would he not conclude it was framed for some excellent Purpose? Would he not even then readily agree with those who acknowledge Man to be a Miracle, infinitely transcending these lower Elements, and no ways inferior to the Heavens themselves, with all the bright and splendid Luminaries they can boast of. But, when he had sufficiently examined and admired this inanimate Fabrick, should he see it begin to live and move with the utmost Vivacity and Vigour, would not this latter Miracle quite efface the Astonishment he before was fill'd with, upon the Contemplation of the Beauty and Harmony so conspicuous in that stupendous Machine. Thus, when we survey a curious Instrument of Musick, we may very justly admire the Beauties of each individual Part of it; but that Admiration presently ceases, when we lend an attentive Ear to the harmonious Sounds it utters, when touch'd by a skilful Hand. If then the bare Reflection on that Power, which gives but Motion to the Body of Man, be a Matter of such Amazement, what shall we say, when we seriously consider the other Properties of the Soul; when we recollect with how much Ease it makes the most distant Objects present to the Eye of the Mind, recalls Transactions long since past, brings to Remembrance former Conversations, and performs all her several Motions, even when the Body is confined within the narrow Limits of a Closet?

Shall

Shall we not be led to acknowledge, that there is SERM.
something dwelling within us more excellent than IV.
any other, tho' the most finished Part of the Creation? B

Plato observes, " That there is an *inward* as
" well as *outward Man*; the latter we may dis-
" cern with our corporeal Eyes, which retains its
" Form after Death, as an Organ does after the
" Musician ceases to touch it: The former is
" the Soul, which tho' united to the Body, makes
" use of it only as a Vehicle. The one is at rest,
" tho' the other moves; this ranges, when that
" stands still; this sees, when that has its Eyes closed,
" and is often blind, when that enjoys its per-
" fect Sight. This labours, when that is inactive;
" and is motionless, when that labours." It can
operate without the Assistance of the outward
Man. This we may be convinced of, when we
reflect on the Activity of the Soul, when the Body
lies in a profound Sleep, that just and lively Em-
blem of Death. At such a Time as this, how
sprightly is the Soul? How readily does it act
over again the Business or Pleasures of the Day?
How easily are the Transactions of a Week per-
formed in the short Space of an Hour? How often
do we attempt the most surprising Feats, when our
Bodies are laid in the most profound Insensibility?
When we recollect how soon Difficulties are over-
come, and what bold Undertakings are presently
accomplished in our Dreams; it would be no un-
natural Suggestion, should we suppose, that the
Soul, in these nocturnal Sallies, is trying her Strength,
struggling for Freedom, and rejoicing over her Se-
paration from the Body, till some Accident recalls
and confines her again to her earthly Tabernacle.
If therefore constant Experience convinces us, that
the Soul is freer, when the Body is at rest, than at
other Times, that she can perform more arduous
and

SERM. and difficult Undertakings, that she can resolve,
 IV. contrive, and execute, that she can remember, and
 dispute without the Assistance of the Body, shall
 we not easily entertain an Idea of her Existence
 abstracted from her Partner? Shall we not rather
 readily suppose, that she will act with less Re-
 straint, when disincumber'd from the Load that
 obstructs her Flight? I foresee it may be objected,
that the Soul is sometimes inactive, as well as the Bo-
dy, and lock'd up in a profound Sleep without so
much as the least Consciousness of its Existence; and
that Death may be for a Continuance, what this is
only for a few Hours: But I would appeal to any
 Man's Experience, whether, when awake, he has
 not attempted to communicate some Thought to
 his Companion, which, in the very Moment,
 before he could give it Utterance, he has abso-
 lutely forgot: If so, I make no Doubt, but that
 the Soul always thinks, tho' perhaps we retain no
 Idea of what she has been employ'd about during
 the Hours of our Sleep. We cannot conceive how this
 busy active Principle within us can cease to be, can
 cease to think, and act according to its Nature.

But to return to *Plato's* Observation. "The
 inward Man, says he, is an Epitome of all the
 Life, Motion, and Sense, with which the Crea-
 Min: tures are endued; and even (*since the Fall*) is
 a Shadow of the Divine Nature." Plants have
 not only a visible Body, but also an inward, invi-
 sible Virtue, which makes them live, grow, flou-
 rish, and bring forth Fruit; and this is called the
vegetative Soul, which distinguishes it from Stones
 and Metals, which have it not. Animals have
 not only this *vegetative Soul*, which exerts itself
 while they are asleep; but besides this, have a
 Power of seeing, hearing, tasting, &c. and some
 of them of treasuring up what they take in with
 their

from the Nature of the Soul.

43

SERMON
IV.

their Senses, which Faculties Plants have not, *i. e.* they have a *sensitive Soul*, so called, because it makes Use of the Senses in its Operations. Man is not only a *vegetative Soul*, as appears from his Nourishment and Growth; and a *sensitive Soul*, as appears from the Vivacity of his Senses; but he has, moreover, a *rational Soul*, which argues, and uses visible Things as Instruments in the Contemplation of such as are invisible. 'Tis this that demonstrates him to be, not merely a Plant or Animal, but a Man, and a Shadow or faint Resemblance of the Deity. Still, however, he has but one Soul; *i. e.* as the *sensitive Soul*, of an Animal, includes the *vegetative*; so the *rational Soul* of a Man comprehends both these; it lives, perceives, and reasons, in the same Manner, as his Thoughts may be taken up with Reflections on his own private Affairs, the Concerns of his Country, and the Joys of a better Life. To speak more properly, these three Degrees of Souls, which gradually excell each other, are Degrees of Life. The first, which barely exists, and is altogether incapable of moving from the Place where it grows, is that of a *Plant*. The second, which is so closely link'd to the Body, that it perishes with it, is that of an *Animal*, which has the Power of Motion, and various Faculties to exert by Means of the Organs of the Body. The third, which has no Dependence on the Body, but can live and act without it, is that of a *Man*; and this retains, nay increases its Virtue, as I shall shew hereafter, when the Strength of the Body, to which it is united, fails, and the Vigour of the Senses grow faint and languid.

There are three Degrees of Men, which may properly be distinguished by the three Degrees of Souls beforementioned. The *vegetable Man*, who, like a Plant, only lives, and is nourished, and whose

SERMON. whose Senses and Reason are subservient to these

IV. Purposes only, who is a mere Blank in the

Commonwealth; whose Cares extend no farther than just to the Preservation of his Life; and who hardly seems capable either of Pleasure or Pain. The *animal Man*, who gives himself wholly up to the Contemplation of sensible Objects, who debases his Reason, and eagerly pursues his unlawful Pleasures, who gratifies his brutal Appetites, and thinks nothing a greater Fatigue, nothing so disagreeable as Reflection. Lastly, there is the *rational Man*, who lives principally upon Spiritual Entertainments, turns his Eyes inwards on his own Actions, in order to regulate them by the Rules of Prudence and Virtue; contemplates the Works of Nature, and adores his God with a Heart fill'd with Gratitude and Love; uses this Life only in order to a better, and his Senses only as subservient to his Soul. Thus, as a Man's Behaviour is, so ought his Denomination to be; and he either resembles an Angel, a Brute, a Plant, a Stock, or a Stone, according as he neglects or improves those Faculties which God has given him.

Now should any one say, I am convinced that I have such a Soul, as you have described, endow'd with *Life, Sense, and Reason*, and therefore would gladly be informed what this Soul is; I might ingenuously confess, since Many, more learned than myself, have made the same Concession, that I am perfectly at a Loss to resolve the Question; yet such our Ignorance will no Ways puzzle or perplex the Cause in hand: Since the Effects are plain, the less we understand of its Nature, the more exalted it must be: For nothing can fully comprehend what is more excellent than itself; and the Soul, while incumber'd with this Tenement of Clay, may be said to be inferior to
itself;

itself, as he, who is fetter'd and hand-cuff'd, and by that means cannot exert the Strength which he could were he free, may with Propriety enough be term'd but Half a Man. SERM. IV.

Let us try, however, to satisfy the Demands of this curious Inquirer as well as we can; and since we cannot possibly give him any adequate Idea of what the Soul is, it may be of some Use and Satisfaction to him to know for certain what it is not.

In the first Place then, common Sense and Reason dictate to us, that it is not the Body; for if it were, it would grow up with it; whereas the one grows only to such a particular Age, whilst the other, after that, makes daily Improvements. Besides, the Soul is oftentimes most vigorous, when the Body is most infirm and inactive: The former improves in Knowledge, the latter in Stature. Again, if it were the Body, it would decay with it, and Persons, who struggle with bodily Infirmities, would labour likewise under mental Imperfections: Whoever had a broken Leg or an Arm, would have a Wound in his Soul too; whoever was infected with any Disease, would also find his Reason ruffled and discomposed; he that had lost his bodily Eyes would find the Eyes of his Mind overwhelmed with Darkness. The Reverse, however, is apparent from common Observation; for oftentimes a most noble, generous, and sprightly Soul inhabits an infirm, blind, and decrepit Body. In short, let us take a Survey of the Dead, and to all outward Appearance the Body will be no ways different from what it was in its Health and Vigour; we must therefore conclude, that there was something invisible in that Body, whilst alive, far different from the terrestrial Part that is obvious to our Eye-sight.

But

SERM.

IV.

But some obstinate Persons may still farther object, *That the^s Soul improves in Vigour and Strength, as the Body does, because a Man can carry with Ease what a Child cannot so much as move; and a Child of two Years of Age can run about; whereas an Infant of two Months cannot so much as stand alone:* But if either the one or the other should break an Arm or a Leg, those Limbs would be deprived of their Motion and Strength, notwithstanding the Soul would still have the same Power of moving the rest of the Body as before: From whence we may infer, that at a proper Time the Nerves and Sinews, which the Soul makes use of as Instruments to move the Body, are dry and hardened; not that the Soul is anyways grown, or strengthened. As old Men, therefore, whose Nerves are grown stiff and unfit for Action, require an artificial Support, tho' their Souls have as strong Inclinations to walk as ever; the Power of the Soul is the same in Infancy as in Manhood, in old Age as in Youth: The whole Fault lies in the Organs of the Body, which are not equally good in one Age as in another. Thus the Skill of a Musician is the same, when the Strings of his Instrument are loose and damp, as when they are dry, and screwed up to a proper Pitch, tho' the Opportunity of shewing his Art is different. Thus, Children come to a distinct Pronunciation by the Increase of their Teeth, tho' they prattle, after an imperfect Manner, some time before; and old Men speak thick, and almost unintelligibly, after the Loss of theirs, tho' they are still capable of imbellishing their Discourses with as bright Images as ever. Thus, tho' there

^b It must be remembered, that we here speak only of the Vegetative and Sensitive Soul.

there were some Letters in the Alphabet, which *Demosthenes* could not pronounce, thro' a natural Impediment in his Speech, yet he was justly esteem'd the most famous Orator of the Age in which he lived. If the bodily Organs of an old Man were as well disposed as those of a Youth, the *Vegetative* and *Sensitive Soul* would act with equal Freedom; and, if you would judge as impartially of the Power of your Soul, as of the Skill of a Musician, not by the Agility of his Fingers, perhaps stiff and incapable of Execution, by reason of some accidental Distemper, but by the Harmony of his Composures; if you would consider, that you may have an *Inclination* to walk, tho' the Weakness of your Nerves will not permit you; a *Judgment* to apprehend Things, tho' not conveyed to you by your bodily Eyes; that your *Skill* in Eloquence may be the same, tho' your Want of Teeth obstructs the Volubility of your Expression; and, which is more, that you may have a *solid* and *penetrating Understanding* when your Body is most defective; you could not but discern, that the Soul has full Power to animate the Body, tho' in a languishing and drooping Condition: Nay, the more the latter declines, the more the former retires into itself. The Soul, therefore, is not the Body, nor any Part of it, but its Life and Spirit.

Let us now consider whether the Soul be in any Degree corporeal, which is a Question worthy of our Inquiry, and demands a particular Solution. A Body, then, has Dimensions, and contains nothing in it but what is proportioned to its Bulk. Now the Soul takes in Heaven and Earth, Time past and present, and a vast Number of Places, Persons, and Things, without the least Confusion; and the more it is filled, the larger is its Capacity; the more it contains, the more its De-

SERM. fires are increased : Being then in some Sense in-
 IV. finite, it cannot be corporeal ; especially, since it
 comprehends so many and such great Things, at
 the same time that it is confined within such nar-
 row Limits. Again, as it comprizes a thousand
 Places, tho' it takes up no Space, so it is in them,
 without the least Variation of its Place. Com-
 mand your Soul to take its Flight in a Moment to
Constantinople, from thence to *Rome*, and imme-
 diately to return to you again ; command it to
 traverse *America*, or to range along the Coast of
Africa ; no sooner is the Injunction given but 'tis
 obey'd. What Body, however, can be in se-
 veral Places at once without Motion ; or move,
 without so much Time as bears some Proportion
 to the Distance of the Journey proposed ? Again,
 one Body does not receive the substantial Form of
 another, without the Loss or Alteration of its
 own ; nor assume a second Form, without the
 Destruction of the first ; as when a Fire is applied
 to Wood, when a Seed springs forth into a Bud,
 &c. But the Soul receives, and entertains Ideas of
 the Forms of all Things ; and the more it com-
 prehends, the more it perfects its own ; for the
 more it receives, the more it understands, and
 consequently, is more improved.

If the Soul be corporeal, whence does it pro-
 ceed ? Of what is it composed ? If it be derived
 from the four Elements, how came they to give
 that Life, which they have not themselves ? If
 from an Intermixture of them, the same Absurdity
 will still subsist. Shall we not be forced to ac-
 knowledge, therefore, that the same God, who
 framed the Body in so excellent a Manner, breathed
 into it a Soul, to make his Work complete ? The
 Soul is active, the Body passive, and perfectly in-
 active, unless moved by another ; whereas the
 Soul

Soul moves within itself, tho' not moved from without; and, notwithstanding its Union with the Body, is incorporeal, and consequently immaterial; for Matter cannot receive two contrary Forms; whereas the Soul receives Fire and Water, Heat and Cold, White and Black, not only together, but by comparing one with the other, more clearly understands them. In short, the more we abstract ourselves from Matter, the more visibly we discern that nothing can be more repugnant to the Nature of the Soul than Matter is.

In the next Place, let us examine whether the Soul be corruptible, or not; I have shewn already, that the Soul is not the Body, and neither grows, nor decays with it; nay, that it is often-times most vigorous, when that draws nearest to its Dissolution. Can we then be so absurd, so stupidly ignorant, as to imagine, that the former will perish with the latter? A Man's Senses fail him, because his Eyes and Spirits are subject to Decay; whereas a blind Man's Intellects are generally improved, because his Mind is not diverted with a Variety of Objects; and, when the Eyes of the Body drop from their Sockets, the Eyes of the Understanding may be entertained with a Multitude of beautiful ^d Ideas. Moreover, if it be the Eye that sees, and the Ear that hears, it may be ask'd, *why have we not two distinct Perceptions, since we have two Eyes and two Ears?* The Reason is, one and the same Soul performs these Operations by the Mediation of the Senses. And if, as we have before observed, when our Eyes are shut, or the Use of them is lost

E 2

by

^d Whoever has read *Milton* will be feelingly convinced of this Truth; since for noble Descriptions, beautiful Images, bold Flights, and Sublimity of Language, no Writings, the Holy Scriptures excepted, can stand in Competition with his.

SERM. by some unhappy Accident, we see a thousand

IV. Things with the Eyes of our Mind, which are most quick-sighted when our bodily Sight is most dim and imperfect; is it not plain, that the Soul is no way circumscribed by the outward Senses? Is it possible, that the former should be destroyed, because the latter are lost, since the most valuable Senses are then most vigorous?

I have much more to add for the Illustration of this most important Truth; but as the Time is elapsed, I shall defer the Prosecution of this Discourse to the next Opportunity.



SERMON

S E R M O N V.

A Future State demonstrated, from the
Nature of the Soul.

A C T S xxiii. Ver. 8,

*The Sadducees say, That there is no Resurrec-
tion, neither Angel nor Spirit.*

I N discoursing upon these Words, I told you, SERM.
V.
that several very useful and prevailing Argu-
ments for a Future State might be deduced,

First, From the Nature of the Soul.

Secondly, From the Miseries of this Life, and
the unequal Distributions of Rewards and Punish-
ments. And

Thirdly, From the universal Consent of Mankind.

I had only Time to enter upon the first Ar-
ticle, namely, the Nature of the Soul; in which,
as you may remember, I proved to you, that we
have a *vegetative, sensitive, and rational* Soul; that
the Soul is not the Body, nor in the least depend-
ent on it. Why should the former then be mea-
sured by the latter, and die with it, when in some
Sense it makes even those Bodies live, which died
some Ages ago? Or, shall we be afraid of its being
hurt, when 'tis subject to no Casualty, even whilst
united to the Body? Tho' a Man loses an Arm,
or a Leg, or even one Half of his Body, his Soul
is notwithstanding undivided, and its Virtue is dis-
fused over all the Organs of his mangled Carcase.
Nay, the former remains intire, tho' the latter gra-

SERM. dually decays; tho' the Blood be drained out, its
 V. Motion weak and feeble, its Senses obliterated, and
 its Vigour lost, her earthly Tabernacle must be
 mouldring into Dust, before she be discouraged;
 her Walls must be battered down e'er she thinks
 of retreating, and she must be deprived of every
 Accommodation before she will quit Possession. How
 often has it been seen, that a Man, on his Death
 Bed, hath discoursed with more Wisdom than at
 any Time before, tho' in a perfect State of Health;
 has settled the Affairs of his Family with the ut-
 most Prudence and Oeconomy, and has taken his
 Farewel of the World with the utmost Tranquil-
 lity of Mind and Resignation to the Divine Will;
 when his Body, at the same Time, was grown a mere
 Skeleton, withered without, and putrified within;
 and, to all outward Appearance, a most loathsome
 and despicable Lump of Clay? How has the Soul
 exerted itself, and filled the Hearers with the ut-
 most Admiration at its triumphant Raptures, and
 exalted Ideas of that Happiness which it was
 going to taste in a State of Separation from the
 Body? Might we not say of such a Soul, that it
 was struggling to get loose; and, as a Bird, pent up
 within the Egg, must first break the Shell that in-
 closed it, before it can gain its Freedom; so this
 Body must, in like Manner, be dissolved, before
 the Soul can become a naked and unembodied
 Spirit?

Let us examine a little, in the next Place, what
 it is, by which Things are generally destroyed:
 Fire either goes out for Want of Fuel, or is ex-
 tinguished by Water, its opposite Element. A
 Plant dies by excessive Drowth, or by being crop-
 ped at an unseasonable Time, or plucked up by
 the Roots. An Animal dies, either by a Contra-
 rity of Humours, by Want of all Nourishment,
 or

or such at least as is proper for it, or by external Violence. But which of these can any Ways affect the Soul, which is immaterial, tho' united to the Body? Will a Contrariety of Things do it? What can be contrary to That, which equally receives all Contraries, and understands one of them by another? Fire is hot, and Water cold, and our Bodies must feel the fatal Effects of two such Contrarieties; whereas the Mind unites them without heating or cooling itself, and opposes them to each other in order to the more perfect Knowledge of them; and tho' they are mutually destructive in the World, yet they are mutually serviceable in the Understanding. Tho' Peace and War are direct Opposites, yet the Mind can employ itself in the Contemplation of both at the same Time. Death, which destroys the Life of the Body, is not repugnant to the Life of the Soul, but the Way that leads directly to it. Again, can Want of Nourishment prove injurious to it? No, there is no Food but what it can digest; and the more it is filled, the more boundless are its Appetites. A Brute owes its Sustenance and Support to some particular Food that is most suitable to its Nature; but the Soul regales itself on all Things in general. Were there no Objects of Sense to entertain it, it would notwithstanding be taken up with the Contemplation of such as were rational; were there no sublunary Objects for its Amusement, it would reflect on the vast Variety of Heavenly Bodies; in short, were whole Worlds destroyed, it would then regale itself with such Dainties as are most agreeable to the Nature of a Spirit. The Edge of a Beast's Appetite is soon taken off, and his Hunger quickly appeased; for some particular Things only prove agreeable to his Taste: But what can satiate the Capacity of a *rational Soul*? Tho' the

SERM.
V.

SERM. more it knows, the more it thirsts after Knowledge, yet is it never incommoded, or disturbed with the least Crudity or Indigestion. If it goes out of itself, it lives in, and derives its Life from him, in whom all Things exist. Again, is it possible it should die by external Violence, as two Bodies may be destroyed by Collision? But what Body can shock the Soul, which is a Spirit? If then it be no ways liable to receive any Impressions from within or without, can it be hurt in a natural Way? No surely: But it may be overpowered perhaps by its Objects, as our Senses often are, the very Glory whereof may too strongly affect it. Thus our Eyes may be dazzled with the Brightness of the Sun; our Ears stunn'd with the Fall of a Cascade, or a Clap of Thunder; our Smell, with too fragrant a Scent; our Taste, by what is too rough; and our Feeling, by too intense a Heat. For the Generality, it is not the sensitive Power, but the Organs of Sense that suffer. But the Case is quite different with respect to the Soul. For the more glorious its Objects are, the more agreeably it is entertained; if they prove obscure, and we understand them but very imperfectly, they shock us not, tho' they cannot indeed much delight us: But the more we understand them, the more they entertain us; and Truths that are most sublime most quicken our Understandings, and invite us to the Contemplation of them. If then the Nature, Nourishment, and Operations of the Soul be so different from those of the Body, and every Thing that acts by the Mediation of it, would it not be childish and ridiculous to infer, that it is mortal, because the Senses decay, and the Body dies? Doubtless it would; since from thence we may conclude, that it is immortal in its Nature;

Nature; for a natural Death, as well as a violent one, is wholly owing to the Body.

SERM.
V.

It may not be improper in this Place to consider, what the Dissolution of the Body from the Soul, or what Corruption is. Death, according to the Philosophers, is the Separation of Matter and Form; and, since the Body is the former, and the Soul the latter, their Separation is commonly term'd Death. But how can the Soul die, which I have proved to be immaterial, and able to subsist without the Body? And moreover, how can the Perfection of a Thing be the Corruption of it? The less sensual a Man is, the more rational he is; nay, his true Life consists in abstracting himself from Matter. Every Thing acts according to its Nature; and That perfects its Nature, which renders its Operations perfect: The Separation of the Soul from the Body, or of Matter and Form, which completes its Operations, has the same Effect on its Nature. To die, is to become corrupt; to become corrupt, is to suffer; and to suffer, is to receive some apparent Detriment, which cannot be said of That, which receives all Things, and suffers nothing. Intense Heat and extreme Cold corrupt our Bodies, but neither the one could burn, nor the other freeze us, did we not suffer by them. Our Senses decay by the too powerful Weight and Oppression of their Objects, because they receive, and clearly discern what 'tis that shocks them, and acts upon their Objects in such a Degree, as that they are liable to be injured by them; whereas the Soul receiveth all Things by virtue of the Understanding, and acts only in a rational Manner; and therefore cannot be corrupted. The Mind is no more discomposed by reflecting on the most intense Heat, than on the bleakest Air; on the cold Ice of *Norway*,
than

SERM. than on the scorching Sands of *Africa*; on Vice
V. than Virtue: So far are they from being Opposites to it, that it never understands them more fully, than by opposing one to the other. That, then, which suffers nothing, nay, perfects itself by every Thing, can never be subject to Corruption. Again, Death is a Cessation from all Motion, and the Conclusion of this Life, which has a continual Tendency towards Death, as that is no more than a short Passage to the true Life; like the Chain of a Watch, which every Minute of its Motion approaches nearer to its standing still. When the Body ceases to move, it ceases to live; but, if the Soul moved with the Body, it would be carried along with it; whereas it either is at Rest, or travels in a Way suitable to a Spirit; just as a Ship carries us along with it, whether we walk, or sit still; and our Power of walking in it is not in the least interrupted, tho' That rides at Anchor. Again, if the Soul was subject to Corruption, as the Body is, it would be subject likewise to Mutation, and consequently to Time; for Mutation is a Species, or rather a Consequence of Motion, which must happen in some Point of Duration; and at certain Periods the Body manifestly changes, grows, and decays; tho', when the Senses are dullest, the Understanding is sometimes most active. Again, Time past cannot be recalled, with respect to the Body; whereas it is always present to the Mind, nay, perfected and renewed by it. In Time the Body decays and dies, but the Soul is not subject to Time, and consequently, not to any Alteration, and consequently, not to Corruption. Moreover, nothing is nourished by what is more excellent than itself; and Things corruptible live upon such as are equally corruptible with themselves, which they must destroy for their
their

their own Preservation : Brutes subsist on Herbs, **SERM.**
Men on Oken, Sheep, &c. And such Beings as **V.**
can live on incorruptible Things, and not only
conceive them, but convert them into their Sub-
stance and Nourishment, without destroying them,
are incorruptible. Now the Understanding dis-
cerns Reason and Truth, feeds upon them, and
is nourished by them : These are incorruptible
Things, not subject to Place, Time, or Varia-
tion ; for that two and two make four, is as solid
a Truth now, as it was three thousand Years
ago. The Soul then, which comprehends both
Reason and Truth, cannot be liable to Corrup-
tion.

Again, have not all Men an innate Thirst
after Immortality, except those who have dege-
nerated so far as to suffer their brutal Part, their
carnal Lusts, to get the upper Hand of them ;
and even such as these, whenever they grow a
little cool, and give themselves the least Time
for Reflection, feel, doubtless, a Dread of falling
into Nought, which they only smother, because
they are apprehensive of what another Life will
produce ? Besides, when we argue from the Frame
and Constitution of our Natures, we are not to
take our Estimate from the most depraved and
abandoned, but from the sober and considerate
Part of Mankind. And among the latter, we
shall find an earnest Desire of preserving their Me-
mories, and an eager Thirst after posthumous
Glory : Witness the elaborate Writings of the
Learned, the stately Monuments of Princes and
Nobles, the Buildings of the Rich, and the Tro-
phies of Men of Honour ; abstracted from that
universal Maxim, that it is highly ungenerous to
speak ill of the Dead. Whence shall we account
for that Veneration and Respect, which all Na-
tions

SERM. tions pay to the Ashes of their departed Friends,
 V. the pompous Funeral Solemnities, and all the
 splendid Circumstances of such as have departed
 this Life, could we conceive, that they were no
 better than common Clay, and the Dust of the
 Earth? May we not rather suppose, that such a
 Cast of the Mind is owing to an innate Principle
 within, which informs us, that we are immortal;
 and that the Earth, that has once been honoured
 with such a Guest as an immortal Soul, should be
 preserved as long as may be from Oblivion? In
 regard to us, who profess ourselves Disciples of
 the Blessed *Jesus*, this last Article of human Va-
 nity, I mean, the above mentioned Funeral So-
 lemnities, has this very good Excuse for it: We
 look upon such as by Death take their last Fare-
 wel of us, as those who are only removed to another
 State, who have deposited their Bodies in the Bosom
 of their Mother Earth, in order to resume them a-
 gain, when they shall be full ripe for Immortality.

X It would be almost unpardonable, in this Place,
 where the Introduction of it would be so easy
 and natural, to pass over that glorious Illustra-
 tion of a Resurrection, which is made use of
 by *St. Paul*: Observe, says he, the common
 Course of Nature; do not all Things die, in order
 to revive again with greater Vigour? The Grain
 of Corn, which you sow in the Ground, is not
 quickened, except it die; and, when once rotted
 in the Ground, does it not spring to Light again
 with ten-fold Life? Why then should it be incre-
 dible with you, that these Bodies, when sown and
 rotted in the Ground, should revive again with a
 greater Degree of Spirit and Vigour?—But to re-
 turn from this Digression; for such it may be
 thought,

thought, since the Resurrection of the Body is a SERM.
Truth we have gained from Revelation, and my V.
present Business is only to prove a Future State,
from the glimmering Light of Reason; and to
shew, that the Soul may live, tho' the Body must
perish. But before I proceed, I must beg Leave
to remind you, that St. Paul tells us, that our Bo-
dies must die, or be changed; that *this Corrup-
tible must put on Incorruption, and this Mortal must
put on Immortality*, before it can inherit the King-
dom of God.

Now to pursue our Argument. Who can long
after Immortality, that has not some Idea of what
Immortality is? And is it not reasonable to be-
lieve, that he, who conceives the Happiness of
such a State, must be capable of attaining it?
No One desires to be eternal, that is, without
Beginning, because no Man is, or can be so, nor
can he frame any adequate Idea of Eternity; but
every One has the Courage to desire to be im-
mortal: Even they, who do not believe, that they
are naturally capable of Immortality, endeavour to
make themselves so by Art and Industry; and
the most ignorant Persons believe an Immortality
in the general, and easily entertain a proper No-
tion of it. Our Souls are not eternal, but had
their Beginning from the Breath of God, and
therefore they can have no Notion of Eternity;
but they were created immortal, and can there-
fore frame some Idea of Immortality. And why
is this Desire of it universal, if it be not natural?
And how can it be natural, if it be not only fruit-
less and ineffectual, but fills the Mind with Uneasi-
ness and anxious Thoughts? But to come a little
more closely to the Point; let me appeal to your
Sense

SERM. Sense and Observation, whether you do not perceive, thro' the whole Creation, the utmost Regularity; every Thing created for some wise Purpose and Design. Is there any Thing you can discern, that is without its Use? Have the brutal Part of the Creation any Powers and Faculties, but what are of Service, and tend to their Nourishment and Preservation? They have no Fears, no Hopes of a Future State; they have no irregular Passions, but all their Actions are governed by the Instinct, or Sense, common to all their Species: They have no Desires beyond the Gratification of their Hunger; no farther Views than such as tend to the securing them from Dangers; but Man has Passions, Appetites, and a longing Desire after Immortality: And, since God never made any Thing in vain, we must be convinced, that we were designed for something more than this mortal Life; for, if this were to be the only Stage we were to appear upon; if we had nothing further to be careful for, but this Body; how superfluous were Reason? Would not meer Sense, such as the Brutes are endow'd with, have better answer'd our Purpose? What Need had we of any Notion of a God, or the least Inclination to pry into the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, or to dive into the Secrets of Nature, had we nothing else to do, but to indulge our Senses; to eat, and drink, and laugh; and then to die, and be no more? Nay, our very Doubts concerning our Mortality, will go a great way to evince the contrary. We call Man a rational Creature, because he knows what is agreeable to Reason, and what not; his very Conferences about his Rationality, would demonstrate him to be a rational Creature, because he would advance some Arguments in Vindication of what he thought fit to assert: He is likewise sensible

sible of the Difference between mortal Things and Things immortal, which, therefore, is a strong Presumption that he is immortal; and the very Reasons which he might urge against it, would be a Demonstration of it. He would be apt to insist, that if the Soul was immortal, it would act with Freedom, and be altogether independent on the Body. Do but turn your Eyes inward, and consider whether your Soul acts thus, or not. Besides, if you are mortal, what Reason can you alledge for such your Knowledge of Immortality? Your Mind, if ever you have entertained any serious Thoughts about the Matter, will convince you, that your Soul is immortal, since it cannot help dreading what its Lot may be when the Body dies; and whatever Men may presumptuously assert, while they are in Health and Vigour, a severe Fit of Sickness seldom fails to extort from the most obstinate Infidel, an Acknowledgment of this great Truth. Zeno, the Stoick, used to say, "That he had rather see one *Indian* devote himself chearfully to the Flames, thro' a strong Persuasion of the Immortality of the Soul, than hear the Arguments of a thousand Philosophers in its Behalf." And indeed, what Argument can be so strong, so convincing, as such an intrepid Transaction? And we should be much better pleased to see an Atheist bear witness to the Truth of this Doctrine, and of his own Accord make an honest, tho' no suitable Reparation of the Injury he had done to his rational Nature, by acknowledging his fatal Mistake, and dying full of the most dreadful Apprehensions of the Punishment due to his former Demerits, than to hear the most florid and elaborate Discourse of the most eminent Divines upon that Subject. At such a Time as this, he would act, according to the Dictates

SERM. tates of his cool Thoughts ; whereas before, he was
 V. intoxicated, perhaps, with Wine, or dissolved in
 sensual Pleasures. That we have not wanted sufficient Evidence of this Sort, you may be fully convinced by a little Inquiry. Almost all the Disbelievers of a Future State, in former Ages, recanted their ill-grounded Opinion on their Deathbeds ; and, in our own Nation, among many others, one of the most facetious, and, at the same time, the most abandoned and daring Infidel that ever lived, was as remarkable for his Penitence, as he had been before notorious for his Contempt of Religion.

But to proceed. I have shewn you, that we have a vegetable, sensitive, and rational Life ; that is, the Life of a Plant, a Brute, and a Man. So long as an Infant is in his Mother's Womb, he only lives and grows ; his Soul is, as it were, asleep, and his Senses in a Slumber ; during which Time he appears to be no more than a Plant. But, if we consider his Eyes, Ears, Tongue, Senses, and all his various Motions, we shall easily perceive, that he was not created to live always in that gloomy State of Confinement, where he neither sees, hears, nor walks, but was to be introduced into a spacious World, where there is Scope sufficient for the Exercise of all his Faculties, and proper Objects for their Entertainment. As soon as he is discharged from his lonesome Prison, he begins to see, move, and to perceive ; by Degrees he finds the Use of all his Limbs, and proper Employment for all his Senses ; proper Objects for his Eyes, a Variety of Sounds for his Ears, and Bodies for his Touch : We find in Man, moreover, a Mind, or Understanding, which makes use of the Eyes, as Windows, to look about, and find some suitable Entertainment for it. At first,

indeed,

Indeed, tho' it may be agreeably amused with the Multiplicity of Objects which it beholds, and delighted with the Contemplation of them, yet still it finds nothing more excellent than itself, and therefore looks up to its Creator; and even while confined to this Body, contemplates his Heavenly Perfections, and in such Exercises as these soars above the Sphere of Sense; and, as the Infant struggles for its Liberty, exerts itself to the last Degree. Shall we not say then, that this Heavenly Principle within us will not endure to be forever imprisoned, but will one Day seek its Maker 'Face to Face, and not darkly, as thro' a Glass: That it will hereafter live a Life suitable to its Nature, and free from the Incumbrances of Flesh and Blood: In short, as the Infant is prepared and fitted in the Womb for launching into another State, so in This World the Soul is preparing for her Journey to the next. We are filled with a thousand Anxieties at the taking our Farewel of this Life; and we may conclude, that the Infant too would be very loth to leave his dark Cell, if Nature did not oblige him to it. And, had he the Power of Speech, would he not call his Birth by the Name of Death? While we were Inhabitants of the Womb, tho' we had Eyes, we neither saw, nor enjoyed the Light; and for the most part, I presume, were motionless, unless when some extraordinary Accident intervened; even when we did move, we were ignorant that we had either Sense or Motion: Is it any Matter of Surprise then, that in this Life the Eyes of our Mind are so short-sighted? That Many never reflect on the Immortality of their Souls, but when roused to it by some uncommon Occurrence? Is not the Infant, think you, as unwilling to

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make

SERM. make his Entrance into this Life, as we are to make
 V. our Exit, and bid adieu to the Flesh and Sense, in
 which our Souls are imprisoned, or rather in-
 tomb'd? And, had he but a small Share of Know-
 ledge, would he not be as fond of living in the
 Womb, as we are of continuing in this World? And
 would he not have as much Reason to think the
 Theatre on which our Senses act, as much an
 idle Dream and Delusion, as any of us can ima-
 gine that Stage to be, on which our Souls must
 act forever? There is no Doubt to be made but
 that he would.

Let us conclude then with the before men-
 tioned Observation of *Plato*, namely, "That there
 " is an inward as well as an outward Man." The
 Latter comprehends the Being and Harmony of all
 the Parts of the World; the Former, The several
 Degrees of Life. A Child in the Womb lives
 like a Plant, but excels it, and is prepared for be-
 ing an Animal, by having both Sense and Mo-
 tion. These he has in Perfection in this World,
 and some Share of Understanding, which prepares
 him for the other, in which his Reason will have
 ample Room to entertain and solace itself. As
 the Babe makes his Entrance into this World; so
 we launch out into the other. We sally out of
 our first World, if we may be allowed the Ex-
 pression, into this second, for Want of proper Nou-
 rishment; but our Sense is quicker and Motion
 swifter: And from this into the third, growing
 defective in Sense and Motion, but daily improve-
 ing in our Understandings. And, if our Passage
 from the first to the second be called our Birth,
 why should our Passage from the second to the
 third be called our Death? And since the Acts
 of our Mind have such a Tendency to a Future
 State, that it cannot rest in any present Enjoy-
 ment,

ment, this World can be but like an Inn, where we lodge for a Night, as we are travelling towards the Heavenly *Canaan*. SERM.
V.

I should conclude this Part of my Discourse, with answering some few Objections, which I foresee may possibly be made to it; but as that would take up too much Time, I shall reserve the Prosecution of it for the next Opportunity.



S E R M O N VI.

A Future State demonstrated, from the
Nature of the Soul.

A C T S xxiii. Ver. 8.

The Sadducees say, That there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.

SERM.
VI.

IN a former Discourse upon these Words, I told you, that several very useful and prevailing Arguments for a Future State might be deduced,

First, From the Nature of the Soul.

Secondly, From the Miseries of this Life, and the unequal Distributions of Rewards and Punishments. And

Thirdly, From the universal Consent of Mankind.

In the Conclusion of my last Discourse, I promised to answer the Objections that might possibly be alledged against what I had advanced, in relation to the Nature of the Soul; and this I flatter myself I shall be able to do to the intire Satisfaction of every serious Christian.

First then, some may say, *That the Soul and the Body are the same, because we see nothing but the Body; as they deny a Deity, because they cannot see him.* To this I answer, we see God and the Soul in their Effects. A dead Body has the same Parts, that it enjoyed when living, but does not perform the same Functions which it did before. The Eye ceases to see, tho' the Eye itself remains intire; and therefore the visive Faculty

culty is not owing to the Body. The most SERM.
piercing Eye cannot see itself; and, if the Soul VI.
were to be seen by the Eye, it would lose its Na-
ture, and be no longer a Soul, but a Body; for
our Eyes are capable of discerning Nothing but
Bodies. But say some, *tho' we have a sensitive
Power, yet we have not a rational one; since, what
we call Reason is nothing more than a quick Sense,
or the Result of it, and when the Senses decay, that
perishes with it.* But this very Argument of
theirs is a plain Demonstration that they have a
Faculty superior to Sense. For the quickest Sense
can never draw a Conclusion. It can perceive
that there is some Smoke, but cannot reason thus;
if there be Smoke, there must be Fire, and Some-
body to kindle it. Brutes can hear Musick, but
not judge of its Harmony, and discern the Cause
of Discords and Concords, as Men can, and
of their pleasing or shocking the Sense. Our
smelling of Odours, tasting of savoury Meats, and
feeling of solid Substances are doubtless the Ope-
rations of our Senses; but to judge of the inter-
nal Virtue of a Thing by the Smell of it, of the
Wholsomeness or pernicious Quality of it by its
Taste, and of the Malignancy of a Fever by feel-
ing a Person's Pulse, and to penetrate into his very
Bowels, which the quickest Eye cannot, argues a
Power beyond that of Sense. 'Tis true, indeed,
that some Brutes have quicker Senses than some
Men; but then they have not the Faculty of com-
paring Sounds or Smells, &c. with their Oppo-
sites, or of making them subservient to each other,
or to themselves. From whence it manifestly fol-
lows, that there is in Man a Power superior to that
of Sense. No one sure would venture to say,
that the most acute Sense could ever make a Man
either a Painter, a Master of Musick, or a Phy-
sician.

SERM. fician. Nay, how often do we run counter to the
 VI. Judgment of Sense? Such a Tower, at a Distance,
 seems to the Eye to be round, but our Reason perhaps tells us it is square; a Thing which appears to be but small to the one, appears to be great to the other; the Former takes the Extremities of two Lines in a long Avenue to meet; whereas the Latter apprehends them to be parallel. Tho' a Clap of Thunder seems to the Ear to succeed a Flash of Lightning, yet Philosophy acquaints us, that they are instantaneous. Sugar, to a distemper'd Palate, may seem to be bitter, tho' our Reason dictates to us, that 'tis sweet. Some vainly imagine, that those, who have seen most, have the most Qualifications to recommend them; but alas! a very little Observation will confute such an idle Surmise; for too many great Travellers have returned home as weak and ignorant, as they were when they first set out. An Horse has as quick Senses as his Rider, and yet neither of them perhaps is the wiser for what they have seen; from whence it follows, that 'tis not mere Sight that improves a Man's Judgment, but proper Observation.

The Quickness of the Sense is one Thing, the Faculty which directs it, another; as a Spy is one Thing, the Intelligence he gets, another; and the Prudence of him that sent him is distinct from both. Nay, Sense and Reason are often contrary. The Former dictates to us, that we should not put ourselves to Pain, the Latter, that we should submit to the Amputation of one Member for the Preservation of the whole Body. If we had seen a *Cranmer* resolutely thrust his Hand into the Flames with the utmost Intrepidity and Serenity of Mind, we should have concluded him at once to be void of Sense, so mightily doth Reason controul

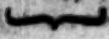
troul it. Appetite is the Bent of the former, and the Will the Inclination of the latter; and as the Understanding often corrects the Senses, and is repugnant to them; so the Will checks the sensual Appetite, restrains it from drinking in one Distemper, sleeping in a second, and eating in a third. Besides, the more a Man gratifies his Appetites, the less his Will has the Ascendant over him; and the more Understanding he has, the less he regards the Judgment of Sense.

Had a Man, like the Brutes, a sensitive Part only, could a Child be capable of driving whole Flocks of Sheep, or Herds of Cattle where he pleased, tho' against their Inclination? How comes it to pass, that the Birds observe one general Method in the Building of their Nests, and tune their Throats so little different from one another? Men, on the other hand, are sometimes governed by Laws directly opposite, and their Politicks, Modes of Building, and Methods of Thinking are widely distant from each other. Now can any Thing treasure up so many Contrarieties, but That to which nothing is contrary. He therefore that denies there is in Man a Power beyond that of Sense, must be void of Sense and Understanding too.

Again, says an Objector, *this rational Faculty (which is indeed the Man) is corruptible, as well as the Senses.* Tho' I flatter myself that the contrary has already been clearly proved, yet it may not be altogether useless to inquire a little further into their fallacious Way of reasoning, *The Form or Shape of any Thing, say they, perishes with its Matter; now the Soul is the Form of the Body, and therefore dies with it.* The Argument, indeed, would be conclusive, were the Soul a material Form; but I have proved it is immaterial, and can exist without the Body; and the

SERM. more it abstracts itself from Matter, the more it re-
 VI. tains its proper Form, and therefore is not affected
 by the Corruption of the Body.

Again, *If the Soul, say they, survives the Body, why has no one ever come back to decide the Controversy?* A very subtle Interrogatory truly! Shall we deny there is such a Place as *Greenland*, because perhaps we have never seen any of the Natives of the Place? May not they, by a Parity of Reason, deny that there is such a Place as *England*, because we never went to them; and, if there be so little Communication between Persons in this World, can we be reasonably surpris'd, that there should be none between us and the World of Spirits? Suppose a Man should be banished from his native Country to a Place both unhealthful and unpleasant, would he be fond, think you, when once recalled, of returning again. And can we imagine, that the Spirits of just Men made perfect in Heaven, their native Country, should be willing to descend to these lower Regions again, where there is no such Thing as Perfection. Besides, as one who is a Prisoner cannot discharge himself, at Pleasure, from his Confinement, tho' his Inclination for Liberty be ever so strong; so may we not suppose, that a departed Soul cannot return from the other World, without Permission from the Almighty? The Restraint of the latter, indeed, is most agreeable to his Choice, whereas that of the former is repugnant to his Inclination. But is it not unreasonable to expect, that God should gratify our Curiosities so far, as to send a Spirit hither to convince us that there is another World, when the Belief of so important a Truth is an Advantage to ourselves, and none to him? In a Word, is not this altogether as unreasonable, as to desire any one to return into his Mother's Womb,

Womb, for no other Purpose, but to inform the SERM.
Babe, with which she may be pregnant, that there VI.
is a World, besides the gloomy Prison he inhabits? 

Again, you grant, say they, *that we have but one Soul, tho' it has several Faculties, and why should not the rational Soul die, as well as the vegetative and sensitive?* But to this I answer, we may as well say a Man ceases to be a skilful Fencer, or Musician, because by Accident he drops his Sword, or his Hand becomes lame. Thus, when the Senses are incapable of exercising their several Functions, the Soul is the same, which tho' it sometimes does, yet does not always make use of corporeal Instruments. In Sensation it makes use of the Body, as a Musician does of a Viol, whose Skill remains, when the Instrument is broken to Pieces; and, tho' he cannot make that speak, supply him but with another, and he will play as harmoniously as before. A Man in Years would see, as well as when he was a Youth, were his optic Nerves but as strong and vigorous; and grow as well, had he but as good a Digestion, and was the kindly Heat of his Body no ways abated. The Soul, however, can act without the least Dependence on the Body; and the more intent and contemplative it is, the less does it regard the Objects of Sense that are round about it; the less she reflects on earthly and corruptible Objects, the more sprightly and active she is. We understand and will diverse Things, about which our Senses are no ways employed; the Soul performs these Operations without the least Aid or Assistance from the Body: The Soul therefore may exist, may act regularly, and be perfectly happy, without being united to the Body.

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SERM.

VI

It may be objected again, *That Idiots and melancholly Persons are frequently deprived of their Reason; from whence 'tis evident, that Reason may be corrupted; and, if corrupted, it may die; for what is Death, but an utter Corruption? The Soul therefore is subject to Death.* But Many, who have laboured under these unhappy Circumstances, have frequently recovered by taking proper Medicines, and confining themselves to some particular Diet; which shews, beyond all Contradiction, that they were not actually deprived of their Senses, but that they were confused, because the bodily Organs, thro' which they look'd, as thro' a Glass or a Cloud, were dim, and their Imaginations dark. Thus, tho' the Sun may seem sometimes to be a dark Body, yet if it be dim, or in an Eclipse, the Reason is, either because some Vapours obstruct our Sight of it, or the Moon interferes between That and the Earth: It is, in Reality, as much a lucid Body as ever. Thus it fares with our bodily Eyes; remove but the Impediments, and their Sight is clear; free them from their noxious Humours, and they will discern every Object distinctly. Thus the Mind, like the Sun, when it breaks thro' a Cloud, shines with its native Lustre; whereas the Body, after a tedious Sickness, either retains a Shortness of Breath, a Defluxion of Rheum upon the Lungs, or, after some great Wound, a Scar, which will never wear out. The Understanding and Will, however, are still the same, unless there remains some Weakness or Defect in the Organs. Thus, in an *Epilepsy*, or Falling Sickness, the Understanding seems to be totally lost; but, when the Violence of the Fit is over, it soon recovers itself, and is as bright as ever. The Body is subject to a thousand Distempers, which have no Influence on the Mind, because they do not

not affect the Instruments which work upon the SERM.
Understanding. The Mind, indeed, may be VI.
ruffled and discomposed, because the Imagination ~
is so, which does not then represent Things as they
really are. Whenever a judicious Physician sees
any Persons out of their right Mind, he with Ease
discovers to what Cause the Misfortune is owing;
either to a mishapen Head, or an Overflowing of
some melancholly Humour, which first disorder-
ed the Body. Thus, wise Men sometimes form
weak Designs, when they put too great a Confi-
dence in the false Intelligence of their Spies; and
yet they act upon rational and political Principles:
Neither could they be guilty of such Mistakes, or
be deceived by such false Intelligence, were they
not Men of some Parts and Understanding; for
such as are wholly ignorant, or thoughtless, would
not reason about the Matter, nor draw any Con-
clusions concerning the Event. In like manner
the Mind reasons wrong, because the Imagination
misrepresents Things to it. There are some Fol-
lies, which none but wise Men can commit, and
some Errors, which the Vulgar and Illiterate are
in no Danger of giving into. As, for Instance,
to be deceived by the false Intelligence of a Spy,
or an intercepted Letter, a Man must have Rea-
son, or he could not argue about the Conse-
quences, nor act in Pursuance of such Advice; for
a gross Fool would not trouble himself about the
Matter, and therefore could be in no Danger of
drawing false Conclusions, by mistaking Proba-
bilities for Truths. And to mistake some high
and subtle Point of Philosophy or Divinity sel-
dom happens to an illiterate or foolish Man, be-
cause he never employs his Thoughts on Matters
of so abstruse and speculative Nature. In short,
whoever maintains, that the Soul perishes with
the

SERM. the Body, because it seems to be affected when
VI. that is disordered, might as well say, that a Child
 in the Womb must die, if the Mother dies, because it moves when she does, and participates with her in her Sorrows, by reason of the strict Union between them; whereas we see Infants in the Womb often survive their Mothers, and owe their Birth to their Parents Death.

Once more, it may be objected, *That, since the Mind has no Conception here, but thro' the Imagination, when the Imagination, and the Senses which are annexed to it, are all lost, the Soul cannot operate by itself, and consequently, cannot exist without the Body.* This, however, is just the same weak Argument, as if any one should maintain, that an Infant cannot live in this World, because he cannot receive his Nourishment in the same individual Manner, as he did in his Mother's Womb: But the contrary is the Truth; for 'tis not till he quits that first Life, and enters upon the next, that he finds the true Use of his Limbs, which, in his first State, were of no Use but to prepare him for his second. Thus, the Imagination assists the Mind, and prepares it for a Future State, where it will act like itself, and not be liable to any Delusions, thro' the Misrepresentation of the bodily Senses, or a distemper'd Imagination, but shall *see Face to Face, and know, even as it is known.* Then the Will shall command the sensual Appetite; and the Imperfections, which attend the Soul, by reason of its Union with the Body, shall be removed, and the former shall animate the latter after a more noble Manner.

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To conclude, notwithstanding all the vain, weak, and sophistical Reasons of wicked and worldly-minded Men, I doubt not, but that you are all firmly convinced of this great and important Truth, that we are endow'd with a rational Soul, which, tho' it be united to the Body, in order to direct and govern it, is liable neither to Death, nor to Corruption. And, if I have omitted any Thing material, that might further demonstrate the Doctrine I have endeavoured to establish, as it is very probable I have, yet I am confident of this, that enough has been said to confirm those in the Belief of it, whose Consciences bear witness to me, and whose unspeakable Interest it is to believe, and confess it: But if any one continues still obstinate and perverse, and is resolved to offer Violence to his own Reason, let him try whether he can fairly answer what I have already offer'd. And, in the mean Time, let us see what Arguments the Miseries of this Life, and the unequal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, will furnish us with, to prove the Truth in Question, namely, *That there is a Life after This.*

Tho' we should set Mankind before our Eyes in the most favourable Light, yet the Prospect will afford a contemplative Person but very little, if any Consolation; a Moment's Happiness, that is bought, perhaps, at the Expence of whole Years of Misery, and, at best, but a short-lived Joy, which Sickness or Misfortune may interrupt, and Death will most assuredly put an End to. What Difference is there between Wretchedness in State, and Misery in Rags? Let us put the Case as fairly as we can, and consider the Condition of those whom the World calls the Happy, the Prosperous, the Favourites of Fortune: They are surrounded,

SERM. 'tis true, with Attendants, and reside in pompous
 VI. Habitations; but will not the Joy, which these
 glittering Objects create, soon grow familiar? Will they not soon cloy, and leave nothing behind, but a few impotent Wishes for some yet untasted Trifle? How few are there amongst these envied Mortals, that are not, when young, allured to Wantonness, and some sensual Delights? How soon do they grow tired with what is falsely termed Pleasure, and how easy is the Transition from Joy to Sorrow? The Flashings of a gay Fortune make them but the surer Prey to the Spleen, and the lowest Dejection. Could we change our Station in Life as much, and as often as we thought fit, what would the Gain be, but a different Kind of Misery? Are not the Rich and Powerful as subject, if not more, to the violent Shock of contending Passions, eager Appetites, and wild Desires, than other Men? Are they not as often scorched by Fevers, chilled with Agues, and tormented with Gouts, and racking Pains? And, if this be the Condition of the Man who has gained this World, what Prospect will the other Side afford us, but Multitudes worn out with Age, Labour, and Infirmities, struggling with Penury and Want, made a Prey to Cruelty and Oppression; and, amidst a Variety of other Cares, devoured by Diseases, and enfeebled with Sickness? Is there such a Thing in Nature as a perfectly happy, or thoroughly contented Man? I imagine not. 'Tis true, we daily see many smiling Faces, and promising Outfides; but, upon Examination, they will most assuredly be found full of dreary Thoughts, and melancholly Reflections, Emblems of those painted Sepulchres which they are hastening to inhabit. Some will say, perhaps, this is carrying Things too far; Man-kind

kind are not so very wretched as some would describe them. But could we see the inward Motions of the Soul, were we acquainted with what passes in the Mind, when the Body is discomposed, and the Spirits are all drooping, I am apt to imagine, those very Objectors would secretly assent to these Assertions: There are none, I believe, but what have either real or imaginary Evils, to interrupt their Delights, dash with Gall their joyous Moments, and leave them only Spirits enough to make a specious Shew of Happiness to the World. To seem easy and happy, and really to be so, are very different Things; but it shocks the Pride of Man to discover his secret Discontent. I know no Article in Life, wherein Mankind are so universally Hypocrites; there seems to be a general Combination to deceive one another in this Particular; there are few, but very few, who are so open and ingenuous, as to confess that they have no Relish for any earthly Enjoyments; but on the other hand, there are Numbers fond of entertaining you with their easy Circumstances, their Flow of Joy, their full-blown Satisfactions, the Transports of Friendship, the Charms of Wit, and gay Diversions. If you will credit them, their Life is a continued Stream of gentle Ease and Happiness. But alas! is not this all Grimace? How distant from Truth are all these Boasts? How is it possible for Man to be this happy Creature here on Earth; for can we conceive any one so fortunate, as to have nothing to wish for? No Fears to alarm him, no anxious Thoughts to deject him; no imprudent Child, no Relation, or Friend, labouring under such Misfortunes, as are not in his Power to remove? Has he a constant Appetite for Mirth, and such a robust Constitution, as no noxious Vapours can affect?

SERM. affect? Can such an uninterrupted Series of prosperous

VI. Events be long the Portion of any Man on Earth? No, doubtless: And every Man, that asks his Heart the Question, I presume, will be of my Opinion. I make no Question, however, but that many would be apt to say, nay, and speak no more than their real Sentiments; had I but an Estate equal to some of my Neighbours; were I as healthy, as some of them are; had I the Learning of such a Philosopher or Divine; was I the Favourite of my Prince, as such a Courtier is; were my Children as dutiful, my Friends as tender and indulgent, as those of some others are; or, had my Merit the Reward it justly deserves, I should then be easy and happy, be chearful and contented. Alas! should you succeed in such your fond Desires, how great would the Advantage arising from it be? Why, no more than this: You would find how delusive a Thing Hope is; that Happiness, in the distant Prospect, is far different from what it is in the actual Possession; and that the Imagination goes here below, as far beyond the Mark it aims at, as it falls short of those everlasting Joys, which *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.*

That such and so deplorable is the State and Condition of human Life, is a Truth we are all too feelingly convinced of; and a very little Reflection will render us as certain, that we must be the Work of an Almighty and Beneficent God; and if so, we cannot suppose, that he made any Thing to be of Necessity miserable; for, if he, who is infinitely good and perfect, has thought

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to place us in such a State of Infelicity; we may doubtless have a well-grounded Hope from his Goodness, and our own present unhappy Situation, that he has made other and better Provision for us; and that there will be a Life after this, where all ^a *Tears shall be wiped from our Eyes.* For can we suppose, that our affectionate Creator will be deaf to our Sighs; or take any Pleasure in our Distresses? Is not the inferior Part of the Creation free from that Load of Ills, which we groan under; and do not even the Brute-Beasts enjoy a Happiness suitable to their respective Natures: No intruding Cares dash the Current of their Delights; and shall we suppose, that Man, the noblest Part of the Creation, and the express Image of his Maker, is the only Object unregarded; and that the ever-gracious King of Heaven set him up alone to be a Monument of his Divine Vengeance? Such Suppositions as these would derogate from the Perfection of the Divine Nature; and yet would be mournful Truths, were there no Life after this.

But what shall we say, if besides the unavoidable Evils, to which we are continually exposed, we should take a Survey of the *great World*, and view therein all Nature moving with the utmost Harmony, and conspiring with a loud and constant Voice, to proclaim the Justice and Goodness of God; and yet turn our Eyes towards the *little World*, I mean *Man*, and there see Treason and Villainy flourish; Tyranny and Oppression prove successful; the Just and Noble made a Prey to the Sons of Violence, and the Meek and Lowly the Objects of Persecution and Reproach; Merit

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and

SERM. and Industry, in Poverty and Rags; and Ignorance
 VI. and Vice, in Pomp and Grandeur; the righteous
 Man despised, evilly intreated, and neglected;
 and his Opposite caressed, loaded with Preferments,
 courted, and almost idolized? Providence seems
 here as silent as the Grave; and the Unbeliever
 will be ready to conclude, since these Things are
 so, God doth not see, nor regard the Fate nor
 Actions of Mankind.

'Tis too notorious to be denied, that this is the
 Posture of Things below; and yet, that a wise and
 just God presides over the World is very manifest in
 all Things else. He feeds the Beasts of the Forest;
 he sends his Showers at their appointed Season to
 refresh the Earth; he lets fall the refreshing Dews,
 and causes the Fruits to spring forth in their Sea-
 son; and shall we suppose, that he will not find a
 Time to reward distressed Virtue, and to avenge
 the Cause of the Injured and Oppressed? And yet
 we plainly see, that too often they meet with no
 Redress in this Life; for the Virtuous are frequent-
 ly oppressed by the Frowns of the World, and lay
 down their Sorrows only at the Grave; and the
 Wicked run thro' a long Series of successful Vil-
 lanies, and yet die at last unpunished. Is it then
 any unfair Conclusion to assert, that these Disor-
 ders can no where be rectified but in a Life to
 come? Nay, would it not reflect very dishonour-
 ably on God, were it to be otherwise? Moreover,
 were the Wicked to meet their Punishment and
 the Righteous their Rewards in this Life, all Vir-
 tue would be merely mercenary; but since 'tis
 otherwise, may we not be as certain, that there
 will be a Life after this, as that there is a Supreme
 Being, the Existence of whom no one of common
 Sense can in the least doubt of?

I should

I should now proceed to my last Proof of a Future State, namely, the Universal Consent of Mankind; but as I am willing to set this Truth in the fairest Light, and beyond all Power of Contradiction, it would take up more Time to expatiate upon it, than can at present be spared me; for which Reason I shall reserve it for the Subject of the subsequent Discourse.

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SERMON VII.

A Future State demonstrated, from the
Universal Consent of Mankind.

ACTS xxiii. Ver. 8.

The Sadducees say, That there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.

SERM. VII. **I**N discoursing upon these Words, I told you, that several very useful and prevailing Arguments for a Future State might be deduced,

First, From the Nature of the Soul.

Secondly, From the Miseries of this Life, and the unequal Distributions of Rewards and Punishments. And

Lastly, From the Universal Consent of Mankind.

I flatter myself that I have urged whatever was requisite on the two first Articles; I shall therefore submit them to your serious Consideration, and proceed to my third Particular, with which I shall conclude my Reflections on the Immortality of the Soul, *viz.* That this great and important Truth was acknowledged by all Nations, and inculcated by the wisest of Men in all Ages. However,

Before I begin, it may not be improper to remove an Objection, which my Text seems most glaringly to produce against me; for therein we find a whole Body of Men who professedly disbelieved a Future State. *The Sadducees say, that there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.*

When

When therefore we assert, that all Mankind believe any Truth proposed, be it what it will, it cannot be taken in so unlimited a Sense, as if no one Person ever scrupled or cavilled at it; for some Mens Lusts on the one hand, and their Pride on the other, will prompt them to start Difficulties where none could reasonably arise; and there was once we are told a * Sect among the Philosophers, who professed themselves diffident even of their own Existence: A Thought so ridiculous, that the Absurdity of it must doubtless be obvious to the most illiterate Person, and cannot but be the just Object of his Derision and Contempt. What therefore is intended by Universal Consent can be no more than this, that the wisest Men in all Ages have acknowledged a Future State; that the Number of Disbelievers were but few and inconsiderable, and those only, who led such dissolute and abandoned Lives, that they rather wished there was no such Thing, than disbelieved the Assertion; and that even the most barbarous Nations have entertain'd some confused Idea at least of a Life after this. The *Sadducees*, therefore, we may reasonably suppose, were a Set of Libertines, much like our modern *Free-Thinkers*, who fondly laboured to persuade themselves that they should never be called to Account for their enormous Actions; who cruelly delighted to seduce the Ignorant and Unwary, and tempt them to subscribe to their most abject and abandoned Tenets.

The principal Aim, therefore, of my present Discourse shall be to shew, by a Cloud of Testi-

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monies

* The *Scepticks* were a Set of ancient Philosophers, founded by *Pyrrho*, whose distinguishing Tenet was, that all Things are uncertain and incomprehensible; Contraries equally true; and that the Mind is never to assent to any Thing, but to keep an absolute Hesitancy or Indifference.

SERM. VII. monies produced from ancient Authors, that notwithstanding their confused and unworthy Conceptions of God and Religion, yet a Future State was always an incontestible Article of their firm Belief.

It cannot be supposed then, that the Soul, which is so curious, so fond of prying into the Nature of all Things, should make no Enquiry into, or Observations on herself. As therefore there have been Men in all Ages of the World; so all Mankind, being trained up in one and the same School, and under one and the same Guide, namely Nature, have all along acknowledged the Immortality of the Soul. The Sacred Scriptures, which direct our Steps in the Path that leads to everlasting Life, produce no Demonstrations to prove the Being of a God; and why? Because it is a Truth apparent to Sense itself: And for the same Reason there is no express Assertion, especially in the Books of *Moses*, that the Soul is immortal; because if we descend but ever so little into ourselves, the Doctrine will be obvious to our own Reflections. But forasmuch as the perfect Mind and Will of God is revealed to us in the Sacred Scriptures, we are obliged thereby to give our firm Assent to this important Truth. And moreover, as we have there a pathetic Account of the various Sorrows and Afflictions which the Righteous in all Ages have cheerfully undergone for the Sake of a good Conscience, it demonstrates, beyond all Contradiction, that they did not esteem this World as their continuing City, but had their Eyes fixed stedfast on another, and more agreeable Country. For who would resign his Enjoyments in Possession, that had no Expectation of a greater in Reversion? And, who would submit himself to a temporal Death, but with the utmost Reluctance,

was he not in full and certain Hopes of an eternal SERM.
Life. This may, I think, be a sufficient Answer VII.
to those, who demand express Texts of Scripture
for the Proof of this Assertion; and will not allow
That to be any where found in Sacred Writ, which
is undeniably implied almost in every Line of it.
God therefore, when he introduced Man into this
World, gave him Dominion over all the Crea-
tures. He made the Elements indeed produce all
Manner of Plants; but he alone breathed a Soul
into Man, put the brutal World under his Sub-
jection, and required him to pay no Homage or
Adoration to any other Being than himself. We
shall illustrate this by some few Instances. ^b *Enoch*,
on the Account of his transcendent Piety, was
not translated from the Miseries of this Life only,
but was snatch'd up to the World of Spirits, to
taste of those Rivers of Pleasure which flow at
God's Right-Hand for evermore. And should
we but seriously reflect on the Sufferings of ^c *Noah*,
the severe Trials of ^d *Abraham*, the long and te-
dious Pilgrimages of ^e *Jacob*, the distressful Cir-
cumstances of ^f *Joseph*, the Hardships and Sor-
rows of ^g *Moses*, and divers others who distinguished
themselves by their Zeal for the Honour and Glo-
ry of the only true God; would we but seriously
reflect, I say, on the various Sufferings of those
pious Patriarchs, we could not but acknowledge,
that they were so many plain and undeniable Tes-
timonies of the Immortality of the Soul, a Future

^b *Genesis* v. 24. *Eccles.* xlv. from 16. to the End.

^c *Genesis* vi. and the following Chapters.

^d *Genesis* xii. and the following Chapters.

^e *Genesis* xxv. and the following Chapters.

^f *Genesis* xxxvii. and the following Chapters.

^g *Exodus* ii. and the following Chapters.

State, and a final Judgment. For had they consulted their worldly Interest, and hearkened to the Dictates of mere Flesh and Blood, they had doubtless indulged themselves in Indolence and Ease, and swam down gently with the common Current: *Noah*, with his Relations; *Abraham*, with the *Chaldeans*; *Moses*, with the Court of *Pharaoh*, &c. From whence it follows, that tho' this Doctrine is not mentioned in the *Old Testament* in such express Terms, as it is in the *New*, yet 'tis plainly and unquestionably implied; for what are the pious Breathings of the Righteous, and the agonizing Torments of the Wicked, which we meet with so feelingly described in those Sacred Books, but so many Lessons to instruct us in this important Truth? And we cannot assign a more substantial Reason for such an Omission, if it be one, than this, that as the Sacred Scriptures command our Assent to some Articles of Faith beyond the Capacity of our weak Reason; so this being within the Reach of our Comprehension, a more explicit Mention of it was needless in the early Ages of the World. And we find, that as Mankind increased, and those Communications, which the Patriarchs were favoured with from God, grew less frequent, it was thought necessary to remind Mankind of a Future State; and the *Psalmist*, in particular, abounds with Admonitions of this Kind. ^a *The upright shall have Dominion over them in the Morning*, says he; and again in the same Psalm, ¹ *But God will redeem my Soul from the Power of the Grave; for he shall receive me.* And innumerable other Places of like Import will doubtless occur to every one who is conversant with

^a *Psalm* xlix. 14.¹ *Psalm* xlix. 15.

with Holy Writ. In short, were not this the SERM. VII.
Foundation-stone, Religion would become a mere Trade, and no one would pay the least Regard to her Divine Precepts, without some sinister Ends of worldly Interest and Advantage. From all which, I presume, we may safely draw this Conclusion, That the Being of a God, and a Life after This, were Truths none were able or willing to contest in the Days of *Moses*, and therefore Arguments to prove what was then so little doubted would have been altogether needless.

Having thus shewn that the *Jews* could be in no Doubt of a Future State, it will be a farther Confirmation of the Truth of the Doctrine in Question, if we can shew, that all Nations in general have entertained very distinct and adequate Ideas of this Truth. This, I hope, I shall put beyond all Dispute, before I close this Discourse. At present, I will venture to affirm, that 'tis neither a Piece of Priestcraft, nor the wild Imagination of a Parcel of bigotted Enthusiasts; neither hath it been confined to any Age or Climate; but has been the firm Opinion of all Ages, as universal as Light itself; and Men as different in Customs, as distant in Situation, all concur in it: The most barbarous Nations, who have little more than Shape to entitle them to Humanity, have yet some Conceptions (tho' dark and confused indeed) of a Deity, and a Life after This: Now Artifice and Delusion can never be the Cause of this; People, so far remote, could never join in one common Deceit; from whence it follows, that either they must have gained it from Revelation, or else it must be the universal Voice of Nature. If from the former, then the Dispute is at an End, and if 'tis implanted in our Natures, we see God does Nothing in vain; and we are led into this Hope,

SEEM as the Beasts are to the Choice of such peculiar

VII. Food as is proper for them. Having drawn this natural Conclusion from what has been said, I think there will want nothing further to confirm the most hardened Unbeliever in this great Point, than to shew, that the wisest Men in all Ages, and in all Nations, have acknowledged a Future State. Are not the repeated Recommendations of Virtue and Piety, which may be met with in numberless Heathen Writers, indisputable Testimonies of this Doctrine? *I will sacrifice all my Substance, nay my Life itself,* says an ancient Author, *to maintain the Laws of Justice.* And what would Justice be but a vain Name, were there no Life after This? *I had rather,* says another, *be, than seem honest.* But for what Reason, were not his Virtue to be rewarded hereafter? These, and such as these, are the common Expressions, even of such as speak doubtfully of a Future State. Thus they deny a Principle, but grant a Consequence from it; like One, that first burns himself, and then disputes whether Fire be hot.

But to put this Matter beyond all Dispute, I shall beg your Patience, whilst I select some few Passages from the Ancients, who speak more plainly, and in more direct Terms, on the Subject before us. And this I shall the more chearfully enter upon, as it will furnish my attentive Hearers with frequent Opportunities of reflecting on that Harmony and Agreement, which they will sometimes find between those, that wrote from the Dictates of Nature only, and those who were guided by the Influence of the Holy Spirit; and I hope they will accompany their Reflections with this useful Inference, *viz.* That such a Conformity of Sentiments in Writers of different Nations, and different Faiths, undeniably confirms the Truth of what

what *Moses* asserts, namely, that we all sprung SERM.
from one common Stock; that our first Parents VII
were taught their Duty from God himself, that
they delivered it to their Children, who in Pro-
cess of Time were scattered and dispersed over the
Face of the whole Earth; and that still they re-
tained a Knowledge of some Truths by uninterru-
pted Tradition. But to proceed to the pro-
mised Quotations.

Hermes tells us, "At the Command of God,
"the Elements produced a vast Variety of Plants,
" &c. but that God created Man like himself;
"caress'd him with the Tenderness and Indul-
"gence of a Father, as he was exceedingly beau-
"tiful, and the express Image of his Person, and
"constituted him the Lord of the Brute-Crea-
"tion." He exhorts Men, therefore, to abstract
themselves from their Bodies, as the Cause of
their Death (tho' he admires the Art so conspi-
cuous in their curious Contexture) and to culti-
vate their Souls, which are capable of Immortali-
ty; to claim Kindred with Heaven, and avoid
the Snares of Sense; to retire within themselves, and
by complying with the Divine Will commence a
Kind of Gods. "Disengage thyself, *says he*, from
"that Body which thou carriest with thee; that
"Garment of Ignorance, that Foundation of De-
"pravity, that Bond of Corruption, that living
"Death, that sensible Carcase, that portable
"Grave, and domestick Robber, which flatters,
"because it hates, and hates, because it envies;
"which, as long as it lives, deprives thee of thy
"true Life, and is thy most formidable Adver-
"sary."

SERM. "sary." As much, however, as he inveighs
 VII. against, and depreciates the Body, who would
 cheerfully submit to Death, were it not for the
 Hopes of another, and better Life? In another
 Place he says, "The Soul is the Garment of the
 Mind, and the Garment of the Soul, a certain
 Spirit, by which it is united to the Body. And
 the Understanding is properly the Man, that is
 a Divine Animal, with whom the Brutes are
 not to be compared; nay, it is a Question
 whether he does not excell the Gods themselves,
 who cannot descend to Earth without quitting
 their Celestial Mansions; whereas he measures
 Heaven without forsaking his earthly Taber-
 nacle: So that, in Truth, he is a Kind of a
 mortal God, and they of immortal Men." And
 he concludes, "Man's Body is mortal, his Soul
 immortal, and the substantial and true Man is
 instantaneously produced by God, as Light by
 the Sun." And *Chalcidius* reports, that, at his
 Death he used this Expression, "I am return-
 ing to my native Country, where my best Pa-
 rents and Relations dwell."

We have only some Fragments of *Zoroaster*,
 who was a more ancient Author than *Hermes*, yet
 he is reported by many to have held, not only the
 Immortality of the Soul, but the Resurrection of
 the Body likewise. And the Oracles of the wise
 Men of *Chaldea*, who were his Disciples and Ad-
 herents, plainly intimate as much. "Return with-
 out Delay, says one, to your Heavenly Father,
 who has infused in you a Soul from above, en-
 dued with a bright Understanding. Seek Hea-
 ven, says another, which is the proper Habita-
 tion

¹ *Hermes*, in *Pœmand.* Cap. x.

"tion for the Soul. *And a Third says*, The Soul
"has the Deity, as it were, within it, and is no
"ways liable to Mortality. *A Fourth declares*,
"It is a bright Flame produced by the Father;
"who is in Heaven; that it is incorruptible, and
"almost contains the vast Universe within it;
"and *at Length asserts*, that the Bodies of the
"Righteous shall be all glorified hereafter." All
these Oracles are mentioned by the *Platonists*, but
more particularly by *Pfellus*. They likewise ac-
knowledge, that *Pythagoras* and *Plato* learned
them from the *Chaldeans*; and some think, that
Plato refers to them, when he says, "We must
"believe what the ancient Holy Oracles have de-
"clared, namely, that the Soul is immortal, and
"must give an Account of itself to God in the
"Future State." We can scarce say more, who
live under the Gospel, which has brought Life
and Immortality to Light.

It appears likewise from the Writings of *Or-
pheus*, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Pindar*, and the rest of the
ancient Poets, that the Doctrine of a Future
State was universally received in the Ages and
Countries wherein they respectively lived. *Py-
thagoras* was of the same Opinion, and held, that
the Soul was united to the Body as a Punishment
for such Sins as were committed in a State of Pre-
existence. And 'tis conjectured by many, that
he did not hold a Transmigration of Souls, not-
withstanding that Doctrine cannot be said to be
repugnant to the Immortality of the Soul. And
Timæus of *Locres*, one of his Disciples, affirms,
that his Master did not hold it. However that
be, in his Verses he teaches, "That Man is of
"an

SERM. "an Heavenly Extraction, and that he was sent
 VII "into the World to contemplate the Deity."

One of his Disciples says, "That God inspired
 "Man with Reason. Another, That the ancient Di-
 "vines and Prophets held, that the Soul was
 "united to, and, as it were, intombed in the
 "Body for its Sins." *Epicarmes* says, "If your
 "Soul be endued with Virtue, Death can have
 "no Dominion over you, but you will live to all
 "Eternity in Heaven." This was the Opinion
 of the Philosophers in general, and scarce any of
 the Ancients were so hardy as to maintain the con-
 trary.

The noblest Testimony, however, of this great
 Truth, may be collected from the Discourses of
 the Divine *Socrates*, recorded by *Plato*, which,
 no doubt, produced the desired Effect on those
 who heard them, since he confirmed what he as-
 serted, by his Resignation of his Life with the
 greatest Presence and Tranquillity of Mind. As
 the Death of *Socrates* may furnish many of my
 Christian Hearers with several useful Reflections, I
 shall venture at an Abstract of that affecting Nar-
 rative, without any further Apology. *Socrates*,
 then, was condemned to die, by his Countrymen
 the *Athenians*, for too presumptuously attempting
 to give them a more awful and adequate Idea of
 the Deity, than what they had received from their
 Poets and Philosophers. He passed great Part of
 the Day appointed for his Execution among his
 Friends, and entertained them with his usual
 Chearful-

^a *Epicarm.* apud *Clement.*

¹ There is a very entertaining and instructive Relation of
 the Death of *Socrates*, with the Circumstances preceding it, in
Rollin's Ancient History, Vol. II.

Chearfulness. The Subject of their Conversation was the Immortality of the Soul: What gave Rise to this Discourse, was a Question started, in a manner, by mere Accident, namely, Whether it was not the Part of a true Philosopher to be fond of Death, and to embrace it with Pleasure. As this Proposition, taken too literally, implied, that a Philosopher might be justified in the Act of Self-murder, *Socrates* endeavoured to demonstrate, that nothing could possibly be more unjust, or more absurd, than the Indulgence of such a Notion, and that, as Man was wholly dependent on God, who formed and placed him with his own Hand in the Situation he possesses, he could not abandon his Post without his Permission, nor lay down his Life without his absolute Injunction: What is it then that can induce a Philosopher to entertain such a Longing after Death? Nothing, doubtless, but the Hope of that Happiness which he expects in another Life; and that Hope can be founded upon nothing less than a firm Belief of the Soul's Immortality.

In the Prosecution of his Discourse he explained to his Friends all the Arguments that could be advanced in Favour of what he had asserted, and refuted all the Objections of his Gain-sayers. And upon summing up the Evidence, he concludes, in Terms to this, or the like Effect; "If what I advance upon the Immortality of the Soul should prove true, the Belief of it cannot but be highly advantageous; and if after my Death it should prove false, I should still have the Satisfaction of being less sensible here of the Evils which generally attend this transitory Life. If what I say be true, my Gain is immense, my Hazard but a Trifle; if false, my Loss inconsiderable, and not worthy of Regard;

SERM.

VII.

"gard; nay even then I shall be a Gainer.— My
 "Friends, *continued he*, there is one Thing still,
 "which justly deserves our most serious Attention:
 "If the Soul be immortal, it requires to be culti-
 "vated with the utmost Care, not only for its
 "happy State in this present Life, but that which
 "is to come, I mean Eternity; and the least Neg-
 "lect in this one Particular may be attended with
 "such Consequences as may prove fatal and be-
 "yond Repair. Before Death the final Dissolu-
 "tion of our Beings, the Wicked would thereby
 "be considerable Gainers, inasmuch as they would
 "be delivered at once from their Bodies, their
 "Souls, and their Vices: but since the Soul is
 "immortal, it can no other ways be freed from its
 "Evils; nor can there be any Security for it thro'
 "any other Means, than by the Person, whom it
 "animates, becoming very good and very wise;
 "for it can carry nothing away with it, except its
 "good or bad Deeds, its Virtues or its Vices,
 "which are commonly the Consequences of the
 "Cultivation it has received, and the Grounds on
 "which its eternal Happiness or Misery principally
 "depends.
 "When the Dead are arrived at the fatal Ren-
 "dezvous of departed Souls, to which their
 "Daemon conducts them, they are all judged.
 "Those, who have led their Lives in a Manner
 "neither wholly criminal, nor absolutely innocent,
 "are transported to a Place, where they suffer Tor-
 "ments in Proportion to their Demerits, till being
 "thoroughly purged and cleansed from all their
 "Impurities, and afterwards released from their
 "Confinement,

* A Name the Ancients gave to certain Spirits or Genii,
 which appeared to Men either to do them Service or to hurt
 them.

“ Confinement, they receive the Reward of the
“ good Actions they have done in the Body.
“ Such as are judged to be beyond all Cure, on
“ account of the heinous Nature of their Crimes;
“ such as have been guilty of Sacrileges, Murthers,
“ and other Offences of so black a Dye; the¹ fatal
“ Destinies, who pronounce Sentence upon them,
“ hurl them headlong into ^a *Tartarus*, from
“ whence they can never be discharged. Such,
“ however, as are Criminals indeed; but whose
“ Transgressions are to be pitied, and worthy of
“ Remission; such as have committed Violences
“ only in the Transports of their Rage, or have
“ even killed their Antagonists in a Heat of
“ Passion, and afterwards repented of their Out-
“ rage; even such are punish’d, and consigned to
“ the same gloomy Place with the last; but then
“ ’tis for a Time only, till by their Prayers and
“ Supplications they have obtained Forgiveness
“ from those, whom they have so unjustly injured.
“ But as for those, whose Consciences are clear
“ and blameless, who have faithfully discharged
“ their Duty, as far as in them lay, both to the Gods,
“ and to their Fellow-creatures, are admitted into
“ a^a purer and more refined Region; where, as
“ Philosophy has sufficiently purified them, they
“ live disencumbered from their Bodies, thro’ all
“ Eternity, in such an uninterrupted Series of De-
“ lights as is not easy to described”, and which the
Shortness of my Time will not permit me to ex-
plain more at large.

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What

¹ These were called by the Ancients, the *Parce*, or God-
desses who presided over the Periods or Durations of human
Lives. ^a A Place of Punishment, wherein the Wicked are
supposed by the Ancients to receive the Reward of their Deeds
after this Life. ^b A delightful Place beautifully furnished with
agreeable Fields, Woods, Rivers, &c. whither the Souls of
good People were supposed to go after this Life.

SERM.

VIL.

What I have said however will suffice, I presume, to prove, that 'tis our bounden Duty to use our utmost Endeavours, throughout the whole Course of our Lives, to acquire Virtue and Wisdom: For by this Time you must be sensible, how great a Reward, and how high an Hope is proposed to us. And tho' the Immortality of the Soul were a Matter of Debate, which to us does not appear so, every wise and considerate Man ought to think it highly worth his Trouble to run the Risk. And indeed, what more glorious Risk can we possibly run? This blessed Hope ought to fill our Hearts with Joy and Transport; for which Reason I have extended my Discourse to a greater Length than I at first proposed.

When *Socrates* had ended, one of his Friends desired him to give his last Instructions in relation to his Children, and the Situation of his temporal Affairs, that by the due Discharge of them, they might contribute to his Ease of Mind, and testify their unfeigned Respects. "I shall request nothing of you To-day, replied *Socrates*, but what I have done all along; and that is, to take care of yourselves. You cannot do yourselves a greater Service, nor me and my Family a greater Pleasure." The same Friend having ask'd him afterwards, in what Manner he thought fit to be buried: "Just as you please, said he, smiling, if you can lay hold of me, and I cannot disengage myself out of your Hands."

Scarce had he finish'd these Words, when the Executioner entered, and having informed him, that the Time for drinking the Poison was come, (which was at Sun-set) he took the Cup without the least Emotion, or Change in his Countenance, and viewing the Man with a wishful Eye, "Well," said he, what say you of this Potion; may one
" make

"make a Libation of Part of it?" The Reply SERM.
VII.
was, that there was enough for one Dose and no more; "At least then, continued he, we may
"offer up our Prayers to the Gods, as it is our
"bounden Duty so to do, and implore them to
"render our last Moments perfectly happy; which
"is what I now do with the utmost Fervency, and
"Sincerity of Heart." After having spoke these
Words, he kept Silence for a while, and then
drank off the fatal Potion with an amazing Tran-
quillity, and Serenity of Aspect not to be conceived.

Till then his Friends had, tho' with much ado, suppressed their Fears; but after he had emptied the Cup, they were no longer able to contain their Sorrow, but wept aloud. *Socrates* alone remained unmoved, and even reproved them for their Weakness, tho' with his wonted Mildness and good Nature." What are you doing, said he to them? I
"am surpris'd at your Conduct. What is become,
"my Friends, of all your Virtue? Ought we not
"to die in Peace? Ought we not to bless the
"Gods at our Departure? I beg you would be
"easy, and shew a greater Share of Constancy
"and Resolution." Those Words filled them with Confusion, and oblig'd them to give a Check to the Grief that almost overwhelm'd them.

When *Socrates* found the Poison began to operate, and touch his Vitals, he lifted up his Eyes, which he had covered for some short Time before, with a View, no doubt, to prevent any external Objects from disturbing him in his last Moments,
"Crito, said he, we owe a sacrifice to "Æscula-
"pius; discharge that Vow for me, and I beg of
"you don't forget it." These were his last Words, and in a few Moments after he expired
H 2 without

SERM. without a Sigh. — *Crito* immediately went up to
 VII. him, and closed his Mouth and Eyes. — Such was
 the End of *Socrates*. — *Cicero* says, he could never
 read the melancholly Story of his Death in *Plato*
 without Tears in his Eyes. — To conclude then,

If the dim Light of Nature, and the weak Aid
 of Philosophy could make *Socrates* look the King
 of Terrors in the Face with so much Serenity of
 Mind, and Resignation to the Divine Will; what
 Transports would he have been in, had he been
 blessed with the true Light from Heaven? Had
 he been acquainted with the Christian Doctrines,
 what would then have been his Confidence? How
 would he then have ravished his Hearers with the
 Praises of his Maker? Instead of a gloomy * *Tar-*
tarus, to purge away the Sins committed in the
 Body, how would his Soul have admired his dear
 Redeemer's Love, and dwelt upon the Hopes of
 a full and perfect Remission of all his Sins? He,
 doubtless, made a glorious Figure in the Article
 of Death, considering the Age and Nation in
 which he lived, and all Historians are full of his
 just Encomiums; but when we compare his Death
 with those of the Christian Heroes, how will the
 Lustre of it vanish, and give way to so much
 brighter Virtue; when we behold Martyrs of both
 Sexes, nay Children exulting in the Flames, and
 smiling under the Tortures of the most macerating
 Engines; when, in a Word, we view a *St. Stephen*
 on his Knees, in fervent Prayer for his very Mur-
 derers, the most partial Admirers of Heathen Vir-
 tue must acknowledge the Triumphs of the Cross?
 What I have further to add on this Head,
 shall be the Subject of the subsequent Discourse.

SERMON

•• A Place of Punishment for the Wicked, as has been al-
 ready observed,

S E R M O N VIII.

A Future State demonstrated, from the
Universal Consent of Mankind.

ACTS xxiii. Ver. 8.

The Sadducees say, That there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.

HAVING entered upon my last Argument for SERM.
the Immortality of the Soul, namely, The VIII.
Universal Consent of Mankind, I shall proceed
without further Preface to produce some other
Quotations from ancient Authors for the Confirmation of this essential Article of our most holy Faith. I concluded my last Discourse, as you may remember, with a short Account of the Death of *Socrates*. I shall begin this with the Testimony of *Plato*, whose Writings have been justly admired through all succeeding Ages. It is highly probable, that *Plato* had heard of the *Books of Moses*; for he^a represents the Almighty as commanding the Gods, whom he had created, to make Man of a mortal and immortal Part; alluding, very probably, to those Words, *Let us make Man after our own Image, &c.* Now to use the *Rabbinical* Phrase, God spoke to the Angels; but to talk in the Style of our modern Divines, we should say, that the Father addressed himself to the Eternal Son, and

H 3

the

^a *Plato*, in *Timæo*, & in 3. de *Repub.*

SERM. the Holy Spirit. The forementioned Philosopher,
 VIII. however, rousing, as it were, out of his former Le-
 thargy, assures his Disciples, that God created Man
 after his own Image, and bestow'd upon him not
 only a Body, but a Soul^b, which he compares to a
 Ship and its Pilot, a City and its Magistrates, an
 Image and the Person who bears it. And what
 greater Honour can possibly be conferred on Man,
 than to bear the Resemblance and Image of his
 great Creator? In another Place,^c he asserts, "That
 " the Soul bears no small Likeness to the Deity it-
 " self, being rational, uniform, and immortal;
 " and at Death returns to its Parents and Relati-
 " ons; that is, to the all-wise immortal Being,
 " and Fountain of all Happiness, as from Banish-
 " ment to its native Country." He often calls it
 " a being allied to God; a Plant, which hath its
 " Root in Heaven, and therefore cannot die."

Having thus produced Witnesses sufficient from
 the *Greeks*, I shall proceed to illustrate this im-
 portant Truth still farther from the Sentiments of
 some of the most learned *Romans*, who applied
 themselves to the Study of Philosophy much later
 than the *Grecians*, and whose superstitious Rites
 and Ceremonies, whose Contempt of Death, and
 Hope of Happiness, and whose Dread of Misery in
 the Future State, are Evidences beyond all Contra-
 diction, that this Doctrine was universally received
 amongst them.

" The Origin of the Soul, says the learned *Ci-
 " cero*,^c cannot be derived from any thing here
 " below; since 'tis uncompounded, and has no
 " Affinity with any earthly Substance, which, if
 " it had, it would be unable to reflect on, or recol-
 " lect

^b *Plato*, in *Phædone*.

^c *Cicero*, *Tuscul. Lib. I.*

“left past Things, foresee future Events, or comprehend such present Things as are perfectly divine : From whence he concludes, that it is not of human Extraction, but is derived from the Divine Mind, is incorporeal, and by Consequence incorruptible.” In another Place he says,^d “That as there is a Consanguinity among the human Species ; so there is an Alliance between Man and the God that made him ; and though our Society with Men is owing, indeed, to the mortal Body ; yet our Communion with the Deity is owing to him who has given us rational and immortal Souls. Since then we may claim Kindred with the Heavenly Inhabitants, as being all Members of the same Stock, it highly becomes us to call to mind our noble Extraction, and fix our Eyes on Heaven, as our native Country, to which we must shortly return. Consider, says he, that thy better Part is immortal, tho’ thy Body be not so ; and that thou art not what thy outward Shape represents thee to be ; for ’tis the Soul, and not the Lump of Flesh to which it is united, that constitutes the Man. Know thou art a Kind of Deity ; since thou rulest in thy Body, in some Measure, as the great God does in the spacious Universe. And as he animates and governs this World, which is frail, and in some Sense perishing ; so does thy immortal Soul direct thy frail and mortal Body.” And all the Authors that were his Contemporaries were of the same Opinion.

The Writings of *Seneca* * would furnish us with a vast Variety of beautiful Passages upon this To-

H 4

pick,

^d *Cicero*, de Naturâ Deorum, Lib. II.

* *Seneca*, de filio Mart. & Brevitat. Vitæ, in Quæst. & in Tractat. de Consolat.

SERM. pick, but I think his Reflections on the Death of
 VIII. Lady *Martia's* Son may demand, in a more peculiar
 Manner, our most serious Attention. "He is
 " now, says he, become immortal, and has his
 " Habitation in a better World; now is he freed
 " from that Load of Earth, which hung heavy a-
 " bout him; now has he regained his native Li-
 " berty: For these Bones and Nerves, this Coat of
 " Skin, and these bodily Members, do but fetter
 " and imprison the Soul; by them she is oppress-
 " ed, beaten down, and discouraged; she hath
 " not a greater Enemy than this her earthly Part-
 " ner; and, if any thing could, That would destroy
 " her. She is continually struggling for her Re-
 " lease, and desirous of returning to her native
 " Country, where she meets with a blessed and
 " eternal Rest on her first Arrival." In another
 Place he says, "The Soul cannot suffer Banish-
 " ment for ever, because she is not only equal to
 " the whole World, and Time itself, but is allied
 " likewise to the Gods. She can grasp the Hea-
 " vens in her Thoughts, and extend herself from
 " all past to all future Duration. The wretched
 " Carcase to which she is confined, is tossed up
 " and down, is liable to a thousand Accidents, to
 " be tormented with Diseases, to be destroyed by
 " Fire or Pestilence; but as she herself is immor-
 " tal, she cannot be injured. When her Bonds
 " are once dissolved, she mounts to that blessed
 " Place, where departed Souls enjoy a perfect Rest."
 Moreover, he seems to have a faint Idea of the Re-
 surrection of the Body. "Death, says he, of which
 " we entertain such dreadful Apprehensions, does
 " not deprive us of Life, but only discontinues it for
 " a Season: The Day will come, when we shall ap-
 " pear again." As this great Man grew nearer
 and nearer to the Day of his Dissolution, his Idea
 of

of the true Birth seem'd proportionably clearer. SERM.
VIII.
For in his last Words he speaks of it with more Certainty and Confidence than ever.

“ There is Nothing truly great in this World, “ says *Favorinus*, but Man ; nor any Thing valuable in him, except his Soul. If thou mountest up to that, thou soarest above the Heavens ; “ if thou stoapest down to the Case in which it is “ lodged, and comparest it with the Heavenly Bodies, it is less than the smallest Insect.” By which he tacitly implies, that in this Lump of Clay there is a divine and incorruptible Nature ; for how could it otherwise be nobler than the Universe ?

But not to trespass on your Patience by too great a Number of Quotations, let it suffice, that all Nations in the earliest Ages, as well as this in which we now live, had some Kind of religious Rites and Ceremonies ; that they all acknowledged there was some gloomy Place set apart for the Torment of the Profligate and Abandoned ; and, on the other hand, some inexpressibly happy and delightful Shades for the Reception of the Virtuous. The more superstitious they were, the more firm was their Belief in these important Particulars ; for Superstition, as well as true Religion, is seated in the Soul, and supposes its Immortality. The *Indians* committed themselves voluntarily to the Flames, before they arrived at extreme old Age, and called this deliberate Action, a happy Release from a troublesome World, and a Discharge of the Soul from the Body, in which it was imprisoned ; and he was deemed the wisest Man, who put this Act in Execution soonest. In some other Parts of the World, the very Slaves bury themselves alive with their deceased Masters without the least Reluctance ; which they, doubtless, would never

SERM. never do, were they not in some Measure convinced, that their Souls were immortal. The

Thracians wept at the Birth, and rejoiced at the Death of their Children, esteeming the latter an happy Birth: And *Herodotus* tells us, they were called the *immortalizing Thracians*. They were of Opinion, that when they departed this Life, they went to their Saviour, the liberal Donor of Health and Happiness. The *Gauls* and their *Druids*, the *Etrurians* and their Priests, the *Scythians* and their Sages, founded all their Wisdom on this Doctrine, which was so deeply imprinted on the Minds of Men, that it was universally received. The Disciples of *Hegeſias*, the *Cyrenian*, died with Pleasure, after hearing him discourse on the Immortality of the Soul; by which they shewed how fully they were convinced of so important a Truth. And those few Wretches (if any such there were) that could prevail on themselves to believe the contrary, did it not, till they had made themselves stupid and senseless, by a dissolute and irregular Course of Life.

Thus we see, that all Nations were of Opinion, that the Soul was immortal; tho' the Manner in which it should be glorified remained a Secret till the Heavenly Doctrine of our Blessed Saviour was spread all over the habitable World. From that Time Life and Immortality were so brought to Light, that *St. Austin*, triumphing, as it were, over Infidelity, cries out, where is now the Fool or Wretch so hardened, as to doubt of the Soul's being immortal? *Epictetus*, a famous *Stoick* Philosopher, has Abundance of Expressions to the same Purpose. "Are we not ashamed, says he, to lead a vicious Course of Life; or to despair in Adversity, since we are allied to the Deity; since

"since we came from him, and may, if we are SERM.
"not wanting to ourselves, return to him again?" VIII.

I could add an infinite Number of Instances of the like Kind from the Ancients, had I Time to quote, or you Patience to hear them, wherein they speak of a Future Judgment, an Heaven and an Hell; the one set apart as a Reward for the Righteous; and the other, as a Place of Torment for the Wicked, which supposes the Immortality of the Soul.

This Doctrine is not only taught in the *Koran* of the *Turks*, *Arabians*, and *Persians*, but even firmly believed by the savage *Carribees* and *Canibals*; is no Invention of a few artful Philosophers to amuse their Disciples, and received by Tradition only; but is obvious to Reason without any additional Light, and as easy to be believed, as that we have Faces, when we behold them in a Glass.

Here I shall conclude my Quotations, and much I fear you have thought me too tedious on this Topick; but as the Proof of the Immortality of the Soul is the Foundation of all Religion, I shall think my Labour well-bestowed, if I have but confirmed one wavering Person, or caused any one, unthoughtful before, to reflect a little on this great and important Truth. Tho' I am fully convinced, that, at this Time of Day, there are very few, who totally disbelieve this Doctrine; and none that can bring any Arguments worthy of Notice, or of any Weight against it; yet, at the same Time, I am persuaded, that there are Multitudes, who never admit the least Thought about such serious Matters, and too many likewise that endeavour to stifle the Evidences of it in their own Minds, and flatter themselves that it may possibly be otherwise. But as I have produced Arguments of one Kind or another sufficient, as I imagine,

SERM. gine, to convince any attentive Hearer, that there
 VIII. is no Possibility of the Soul's dying; I shall conclude with accounting, in some Measure, for the obstinate Behaviour and perverse Opinions of wicked Men; and lay before you the Reasons, if they may deserve that Name, why there have been, in all Ages, and even still are, some Persons so wilfully blind, as readily to join with the *Sadducees*, and assert so evident an Absurdity, as that *there is no Resurrection, neither Angel nor Spirit.*

First then, as the Belief of a Future State is no small Check to wicked Men in the Pursuit of their lawless Pleasures, and the boundless Gratification of their brutal Lusts, they industriously seek Arguments to skreen them from the Wrath to come. The most profligate and abandoned Wretch cannot but suppose, that if there should be a Life after This, it will, doubtless, be a State of everlasting Happiness, or endless Misery; this they must be convinced of, who believe there is a Supreme Being; and, as that is a Truth too evident to be disputed, they must suppose that Supreme Being to be endowed with all Perfection; and since Man is beyond all Contradiction a free Agent, and knows both what is Good, and what is Evil, he is by Nature accountable for his Behaviour; and 'tis inconsistent with common Reason to suppose, that the Murderer, Adulterer, Blasphemer, and the like notorious Offenders, who wilfully break through all Laws both human and divine, should escape Punishment, when a merciful and just God beholds those Actions: And since 'tis plain, beyond all Dispute, that Punishment does not always attend these Crimes in this Life; and since no Man in his Senses can ever be prevailed on to believe, that he shall enter into the next without meeting with Reproaches for his past vicious

cious Deportment; the Wicked have no Resource SERM.
left but to deny there is a Supreme Being, and to VIII.
affirm, that a Future State is a mere Chimæra, and
nothing more than the Artifice of some designing
Men to keep the World in Awe: As these Truths,
however, have been considered at large; and every
Objection I could think of has, I hope, been
satisfactorily resolved, there are none here present,
I presume, so inattentive, or so remiss, as to be un-
provided with proper Arguments to confute the
Absurdity of such Assertions. And since I am
verily persuaded, that what I have urged is suffi-
cient to convince any one, except the most obsti-
nate and obdurate Unbeliever; I may, without any
Danger, offer a Supposition, tho' absolutely false,
in order to set the Folly of those in a still more
glaring Light, who oppose themselves to the
Voice of Nature, who take Pains to deceive their
own Souls, and buoy up their Spirits with the vain
Hope that there is no Life after This.

Let us suppose then for once, that a Future
State is doubtful and precarious; this, I think, is
the utmost the most hardened Infidel can possibly
pretend to; for to assert absolutely, that there will
be no Life after This, is a Presumption that no one
can have the least Pretences to, and is altogether
absurd: Let us suppose then, I say, that it be
a Question whether we shall live hereafter, or not,
and, even upon that Footing, let us see, in regard
to this Particular, whether he who believes, or he
who believes it not, be the wiser Man.

He that doubts of a Future State can have no
pleasing Prospect, no Idea of Future Happiness.
All this Felicity, therefore, must center in his tem-
poral Enjoyments: Is it in his Power, however, to
prevent Sorrow and Affliction, Pain or Sickness?
Is he not liable to be made the Sport of Fortune,
or

SERM. or will his Disbelief secure him from those Ills to
VIII. which all Mankind are equally exposed? Should he
 live a sober, regular Life, what Benefit and Advantage will arise from his Infidelity? Why, none at all. He is sober to no Purpose; he has excluded himself from all Hopes of an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven; thrown away, not sold his Birthright; and set his Soul with all her noble Endowments upon a Level with the Brutes that perish. Should he be overwhelmed with Sorrows, should his worldly Affairs prove ruinous, his Children disobedient, his Friends unkind and unjust, what Consolation can he find within his own Breast? Why, no more than this, that he shall shortly be upon a Level with his Fellow-Brutes, be, reduced to Dust and Ashes, and all his Thoughts be buried with him in the Grave. A poor Comfort, indeed! A most ridiculous Consolation!

But let us view him, when he draws near to what he calls the Period of his Sorrows; when he is arrived within View of the End of all his Miseries; when he lies on his Bed of Sickness; when the Wheels of Life grow clogged and out of Order, and when all artful Prescriptions of Medicine prove ineffectual to his Cure: What Comfort will his foolish and absurd Opinion then furnish him with? Nay, what Despair will it not raise in his bewildered Mind? He cannot be sure that there will be no Hereafter; and if there should, to what a deplorable Condition must he be then reduced? He cannot be sure that there is no Heaven;—but he is sure, that if there be, he has resign'd up all Right and Title to the Joys of it, and must never expect to be an Inhabitant of that happy Place.—He cannot be sure that there is no Hell, but if there should, what a Condition must he then be in?

He

from the Universal Consent of Mankind.

III

He has justly intitled himself to all the Pains of **SERM.**
it; he has procured himself a Place, where there is **VIII.**

'Weeping and Wailing and Gnashing of Teeth;

*'Where the Worm never dies, where the Fire is
never quenched:* He cannot be sure that there is

no God, that there are no glorious Angels; but if

there should, he is not qualified for such blessed

Company; he has no Taste to join in their tri-
umphant Hallelujahs.— He cannot be sure there

are no Devils, but should there be such Spirits,
what Company has he provided for himself?

What hellish Discord, what infernal Conversation
must he partake in? What ghastly Phantoms,

what tremendous Apparitions, has he provided
to shock his affrighted Soul, upon her landing on
the dreadful Abyss of a never-ending Eternity?

But let us turn our Eyes from so gloomy a
Scene; God grant that we may never behold it!

and turn them to one more entertaining, and more
delightful. Let us see what trivial Hazards the

Believer runs, and what the glorious Prospects are
which he has in View.

He who believes, that is, who believes to pur-
pose, will take all possible Care to order his Beha-
viour in such a Manner, as to intitle him to an

happy Hereafter. Now supposing the worst, sup-
pose there be no such Thing, he has notwith-

standing enjoyed a most agreeable Delusion, and
is even in that Case upon a Level with his Oppo-

site.—He has had a Sovereign Antidote against all
worldly Sorrows; whenever he was oppressed with

the Load of any Affliction, he could ease his Bur-
then, by reflecting that the Life of Man was but

of short Duration; that the Time would soon
come, when his Sorrows would have a happy Pe-

riod.

SERM.

VIII.

riod. He could say with Comfort, that he could be miserable but for a short Space of Time, that he should soon arrive at the Goal of Death, and tho' his Race had been hard and rugged, tho' he met with many cruel and shocking Disappointments, yet the glorious Reward was at hand; the Grave could not fright him with its Horrors, since his Soul could not be mingled with the Dust: That would return to its Almighty Creator, and rest with him in never-ending Joys.—Are not these Reflections of a very amiable Nature? Is not this a Situation of Mind worthy to be cherished? And are not such Thoughts as these in every one's Power to enjoy? When the Believer sees Death at hand, he looks on it as the Approach of his new Birth, he waits with Impatience for his glorious Change, when he shall quit this vile Earth, when he shall drop this Load of Flesh, and with glorious and immortal Angels lie dissolved in Bliss, adoring his Almighty Benefactor, his ever-glorious God and King.

Another Reason why this great Truth is so little reflected on, as we find it generally is, may be the Pride of one Set of Men, and the Weakness of another: The Pride of Wit, or what is too often called so. The Poets, and other Writers of Romance, have contrived so many Representations of the Behaviour and Condition of departed Souls, that their weak Brethren have been apt to think the whole only a poetical Fiction. The first View of a Future State must fill the Mind with awful Thoughts of what may be our Portion there: But we have been diverted from what ought to inspire our Dread or Hopes. By the Buffoonery of such vain Scriblers, we have been induced to view this Truth in so many Lights, that the Ignorant and Unthoughtful are confounded, and utterly at a

Loss

Loss to determine what they ought to believe. They SERM.
have made the Ideas of Death, Heaven and Hell, VIII.
so familiar to their Readers, that it will require a
great deal of Time and much Force of Argu-
ment to recover the Minds of Men to that So-
lemnity of Thought which a proper View of these
Things must of Necessity occasion.

'Tis upon this Account that I have spent so
much Time in illustrating this grand Truth, this
Basis of all Religion and Virtue; for surely every
Man, who is fully convinced that the next Stage
on which he shall appear must be an everlasting
one, will be easily induced to take care that he
enters upon it with as much Credit as possible.

To conclude: I hope I have demonstrated to
Satisfaction, that God Almighty created Man af-
ter his own Image, in regard to his Soul; and
after the Likeness of his other Creatures, in regard
to Life, Sense and Motion; mortal, so far as he is
like the Creature; and immortal, so far as he bears
the Stamp of the Creator: That he, who views
the various Works of Nature, must acknowledge
the Existence of the Supreme Being; that he,
who seeth the Order of the World, the Propor-
tion of Man, and the Harmony so conspicuous in
both, cannot doubt but there is an over-ruling Pro-
vidence; since it would be absurd to think, that
God, who created them with such Beauty, would
leave them to the blind Guidance of unthinking
Chance. In short, whoever seriously considers these
Things, will be fully convinced, that there will
be a Life after This.

*Now let us beseech the Everlasting God, that we
may glorify him by our good Works in this World,
and that he will vouchsafe of his Mercy to glorify us,
when he sees fit, in the World to come.*

SERMON IX.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures demonstrated, from the Sublimity of their Stile, &c.

2 St. PETER i. Ver. 21. latter Part.

Holy Men of God spake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

SERM.
IX.

W Hsoever seriously reflects on the general Depravity of Human Nature, will easily perceive how highly requisite it was, that Mankind should be commanded to pursue their own Interest and Welfare, which, had our first Parents remained stedfast, as they were at first created, they would ardently have coveted, and as earnestly pursued, without the least Compulsion. But since their unhappy Fall, our Understandings are darkened, and our Wills most shamefully estranged from God; and as this was the fatal, tho' natural Result of their Transgression, the whole human Species must from that Time have continued in the most deplorable state of Darkness and Ignorance, had not the ever-indulgent Ruler of the Universe been graciously pleased to aid and assist the Weakness of our Capacities, and to transmit to us his Sacred Scriptures for our Instruction in the only sure Way to recover those inestimable Blessings which we had so justly forfeited. But notwithstanding this inexpressible Condescension, this transcendant Goodness of the Almighty, there are some so wicked and licentious, as still strenuously

nuously to assert, that the Scriptures are the Com-
posures only of a few ingenious and designing
Men, and not the Operations of the Divine Spi-
rit. I shall therefore make it the Business of the
subsequent Discourse to discover the Weakness and
Folly of such an Assertion, and demonstrate to
you, that the *Holy Men of God spake as they were
moved by the Holy Ghost*. To begin then with the
Style and Manner in which the Sacred Scriptures
are delivered.

He that is conversant in the various Compo-
sitions of Mankind, may observe, that there are
two very different Modes of writing in Use among
them. The first is easy and familiar, like that
between Friend and Friend, where they endeavour
to convince each other by strong and substantial
Reasons only, as being sensible, that such are the
most probable, if not the only Means of answer-
ing the End proposed. The other assumes an
Air of Majesty, and is principally made use of
by Kings and Potentates, who, let them assert
what they please, expect to be believed upon their
bare Authority; imagine that their Dignity must
command a due Observance of their Words; and
look upon it as an Act of too much Condescension
to offer Reasons for the Performance of such Or-
ders, as they judge requisite to be obeyed. In
human Sciences, the same Method is in a great
Measure preserved. The Physician expects to be
believed by his Patient, without assigning any Rea-
sons for what he prescribes; and the Tutor by his
Pupil, even in such Points, as the latter might
with Decency and good Manners dispute with his
Companions. Shall not this Rule then, with
much more Justice, take Place in Matters of Di-
vinity, which surpass, not only the Understand-
ing of Learners, but the Skill of the most pro-

SERM. found Theologists themselves. In Philosophy
 IX. likewise, the Professors thereof gradually ascend
 from such Things as are evidently known, to
 others more obscure and uncertain; and from first
 Principles to draw Conclusions: All which plainly
 intimates, that Men, even by Nature, are conscious
 to themselves, that they deserve to be believed
 no farther, than they can make Proof of what they
 assert, tho' the Point be never so trivial and insignificant;
 and therefore they are sensible how deservedly they
 should be laugh'd at, should they imagine their Sayings
 to be of any Weight or Authority in Matters of a
 Divine Nature, and of the last Importance. Since
 this then is the usual Method of writing and speaking
 among Men; and since the Compilers of the Sacred
 Scriptures were indisputably Men of deep Penetration
 and clear Understandings; had they expressed their
 own Sentiments only, they would doubtless have
 observed the same Mode as the Generality of Man-
 kind did; but as their Commission was from above,
 they looked upon themselves as Ambassadors from
 Heaven, and delivered themselves accordingly. The
 Divine Inspirer of the Sacred Penmen expects to be
 believed upon his bare Authority, even in such Points
 of Doctrine as exceed both the natural Belief of those
 who hear them, and the Understanding of all those
 who attempt to discourse about them. *God, say you, created the Heavens and the Earth; and Man is fallen from his original State of Innocence thro' Sin:* But who will believe you, if you are no more than Man, unless you can make good those Assertions? The great Author of the Sacred Oracles commandeth them to be believed: He speaks with Authority therefore, and not with the Art of Persuasion. Moreover, no one of a common Understanding will expect

pect to be believed upon his bare Word, except SERM.
in such Things, as lie within his own Power, and IX.
his own Knowledge. Whoever then, in Things
supernatural, I mean, in Matters concerning God
and Man's eternal Salvation, expects to be belie-
ved upon his own simple Authority; yea, and to be
more believed without, than others with the
strongest Evidence, must needs be the Prince and
Father of the Universe, and not Man. How glo-
riously is this State and Grandeur preserved
throughout the whole Body of the Sacred Scrip-
tures? Where will you find in them any other Ar-
guments, than such majestick ones as these, namely,
The Lord hath said, and it is done. — The Lord
hath spoken it, and he will be believed. Which
Mode of Speech is more firm, by far, than any
Syllogism whatever, and as convincing as De-
monstration itself; for what other Book proceedeth
in that Manner, and, at the same Time that it com-
mands, enforceth Obedience. Impostors, indeed,
have endeavoured to imitate this Stamp of the Di-
vinity; but, upon Comparison, any impartial Per-
son will soon perceive the infinite Distance that
there is between them.

There are many Books of Morality, written by
Pagan Authors, which contain indeed a great Va-
riety of excellent and useful Instructions for the
Regulation of our Conduct: But in what Man-
ner do they proceed against Vice, or deal with
Virtue? Why, they define; —they distinguish;
they dispute; and, if they offend the known Laws
of Logic, are afraid of being censured. The
Laws of God are delivered in more peremptory
Terms. — *He that stealeth, shall pay fourfold. —*
He that killeth, shall be punished with Death. Is
not this as much as to say, that the Sanction of
Holy Writ depends entirely on the Power of its

SERM. Author; and that all human Compositions rely

IX.

altogether on their own *Proof*? In short, our Speech for the generality extendeth no farther than our Power; for which Reason the Tutor speaketh after another Manner than the Pupil, the Prince than the Subject; and the Judge than the Council at the Bar. What Manner of Book then must that be, which speaketh to all Men alike; to Kings as to Subjects, to Old as to Young, to Learned as to Unlearned? That surmounteth the Capacity, not only of the one, but the other also? That neither intreats nor persuades any one, but peremptorily bids, or prohibits all Mankind? In what other Writings do we read of such never-ceasing Punishments, and such everlasting Rewards? And, if every one delivers himself according to his Ability, from whence is this Speech derived, which presumeth to make such Declarations, but from Him, who is himself everlasting? If from a Creature, he must either be a good or an evil one. If evil, why forbiddeth he the Evil so rigorously, and commandeth Good so expressly? Or, in other Words, how cometh it to pass, that the only Marks which he aimeth at are God's Glory and our Welfare? Or, if good, why doth he challenge to himself That which belongeth to God only, and which cannot be imputed to any created Being without the highest Act of Impiety and Presumption? And, if it be neither the one nor the other, what follows, but that it must of Necessity be the Creator himself?

But as the strongest Confirmation of the Truth of the Sacred Writings, we find, that their greatest Advocates resigned their Lives, and incurred the Hatred and Disdain of the whole World, rather than they would transgress the Laws therein prescribed, or treat them with the least Tokens of Disrespect;

respect; being fully persuaded they served such a SERM.
Lawgiver, as not only had an absolute Power over IX.
the Body, and this transitory Life, as other Law-
givers have; but had also Power to confer on
them everlasting Life, or to consign them to end-
less Misery. Another Confirmation of the Truth
in Question is, that the Laws delivered in the Sa-
cred Scriptures affect not the outward Man only,
but pierce even to the Heart. They require Sa-
crifices indeed; but then they prefer Obedience.
They enjoin Fasting, it is true; but then it is from
Sin. They require Circumcision, but then 'tis
the Circumcision of the Heart; and who can be
a Judge of the Secrets of the Heart, but he who
made them? Or who can penetrate into the in-
most Recesses of the Soul, but its Omniscient Cre-
ator? And who could therefore prescribe a Law to
Mens Thoughts, but the Almighty Disposer of
all Things? All which, when duly weighed, will,
I presume, amount at least to a strong Presump-
tion, that he who speaketh so evidently upon Au-
thority, and threatens that which exceeds Man's
Ability, must of Necessity be more powerful than
he.

The Holy Scriptures are likewise the only Source
from whence we draw the Discovery of such Mat-
ters, as mere human Reason could never have ar-
rived at; yet such as, when once discovered, carry
the greatest Air of Probability and Truth along
with them. The Supreme Being is of a Nature
incomprehensible to the last Degree, and indeed
must, in a great Measure, always continue so; yet,
in this Revelation of himself, we acquire such an
Insight into this his Incomprehensibility, as, with-
out it, we could never have arrived at. The
Light of Nature would have taught us, indeed,
that there is a Supreme Being; that he is all-pow-
erful,

SERM. erful, just and wise ; but that God himself should

IX. vouchsafe to visit us in Person, and suffer for us, in

order to make a plenary Satisfaction to the Divine Justice, is an Act of Indulgence beyond any human Conception, and must have remained a Secret for ever, had not God himself thought fit to reveal it. There are likewise a great many Particulars in regard to ourselves, to which, without the Divine Aid and Assistance, we should have been as utter Strangers, as to the Nature of God himself. But in the Sacred Scriptures we find as plain, and as rational an Account of those otherwise insuperable Difficulties, as we can reasonably desire, or are at present indeed capable of conceiving. We should doubtless have been at a Loss to know how this earthly Tabernacle could have enjoy'd so many, and such valuable Faculties ; how we came by these bodily Organs, and much more, how we attained the Use of them, had we not been informed, that they were the Handy-work of an all-powerful Being, who, when he had fashioned them, from his own Mouth, breathed into our Nostrils the Breath of Life. What less could have told us, that when this Ray of the Divinity withdraws from the Body, it returns to God that gave it ? What less could have told us how it is hereafter to be disposed of, and that they must, one Time or other, be reunited, summoned to give an Account of their former joint Behaviour, and be consigned together to Rewards or Punishments, in Proportion to such good or ill Deportment ? The first Man indeed might know when he was created ; yet how could he have found out when the World was created ; and who could have ascertain'd the first Hour or Day thereof ?

Divers ancient Authors, 'tis true, have given us a chimerical Narrative of the Creation of the World ;

World; which, if duely considered, will convince any attentive Reader, that Tradition had handed down to them some confused Ideas of the Truth; but then they took care to croud it with so many idle Conceits of their own, to obscure it with such a Number of inconsistent Fictions, that their most partial Admirers and Adherents could not but reject such a Rhapsody, and conclude it to be the Result of human Invention. But whoever reads the Account that *Moses* gives will be feelingly convinced, that his is the most probable, and best concerted Relation of that Fact; and will find, if he will but give himself Time to weigh well the Manner in which it is delivered, so much of Majesty and Divinity in every Line, as must convince him, that none but the Spirit, that could frame the World by the Word of his Power, could possibly entertain such awful, majestic and worthy Notions of that stupendous Transaction.

Tho' the Sublimity of Style in which the Sacred Writings are delivered must be a convincing Proof of their Divine Authority, to such as have pondered them in their Hearts, and weighed well their numberless Perfections; yet to those who have only taken a transient View of those inimitable Writings, without any serious Reflections, their Majesty will never be a satisfactory Argument that they were the Dictates of the Holy Spirit; I shall hasten therefore to a more incontestible Evidence of their Divinity, namely, the Spirit of Prophecy, which foretold such Things, as neither Men, nor the Devils themselves could possibly foresee.

But before I enter upon that Article, I shall beg leave to entertain myself and you with some beautiful Extracts from Holy Writ, which, tho' they should have no other good Effect, will, I am persuaded,

SERM. persuaded, contribute something towards the Con-
 IX. viction of those, who having never thought
 it worth their while to consult those Sacred
 Oracles of Truth, and Holy Fountains of Plea-
 sure, have entertained an idle Notion, that no-
 thing is to be found there proper for the Enter-
 tainment of any other Persons than Enthusiasts or
 Divines. That this is a gross Mistake, let the
 following Passages witness, which are but few in
 Comparison of the Numbers that might be pro-
 duced; and tho' perhaps I may have made an in-
 judicious Choice, I cannot, I think, have greatly
 erred, since every Page, and almost every Line of
 those Sacred Books, cannot fail of filling a Man of
 true Taste and Judgment with inexpressible Plea-
 sure and Amazement.

For Instance, Where will you find the Deity
 described with such Pomp and Solemnity as in the
 Writings of the inspired Penmen? Whenever they
 speak of the Majesty of Heaven, they do it in
 such Terms, as sufficiently testify they were at
 that Time more than Men; and if so, what Rea-
 son can be given, since in all Ages of the World
 there have been Men of surprising Parts and Abi-
 lities, why some of them have not equalled the
 inspired Penmen in the Elegance and Sublimity
 of their Descriptions? But it is granted, even by
 the Enemies of Religion, that their Writings, in
 that Particular, are distinguishingly great and
 noble. How pompous and ravishing is the De-
 scription which *David* gives in that * *Psalms*, which
 he composed in Remembrance of his many won-
 derful Deliverances from the Hand of *Saul*!

" The Earth shook and trembled; the Foun-
 " dations also of the Hills moved and were
 " shaken,

* *Psalms* xviii. 7 to 15.

“shaken, because he was wroth. There went SERM.
“up a Smoke out of his Nostrils, and Fire out IX.
“of his Mouth devoured; Coals were kindled by
“it. He bowed the Heavens also and came
“down; and Darkness was under his Feet. And
“he rode upon a Cherub, and did fly; yea, he
“did fly upon the Wings of the Wind. He
“made Darkness his secret Place; his Pavilion
“round about him were dark Waters and thick
“Clouds of the Skies. At the Brightness that
“was before him his thick Clouds past; Hail-
“stones, and Coals of Fire. The Lord also thun-
“dered in the Heavens, and the Highest gave his
“Voice; Hailstones and Coals of Fire. Yea, he sent
“out his Arrows and scattered them, and he shot
“out Lightnings and discomfited them. Then the
“Channels of Waters were seen, and the Founda-
“tions of the World were discovered; at thy Re-
“buke, O Lord, at the Blast of the Breath of thy
“Nostrils.” What Poetry can equal this? What
aweful Ideas of the Supreme Being must we be filled
with, when we consider the Earth trembling, and the
Heavens humbled at his Feet? O what Confusion,
and Disorder, what Horror and Despair, must possess
the Souls of his Enemies, whose very Presence shook
the Earth to its very Foundation! Whose Voice is
Thunder, and Lightnings the Breath of his Nos-
trils! Whose Majesty is veiled in thick Darkness,
and whose Vehicles are the Wings of the Wind!

But Sublimity of Language is not the only
Beauty of the Sacred Writings; the narrative Part
will be found inexpressibly elegant, tho’ delivered
with all the Air of Freedom and Simplicity ima-
ginable. The Creation of the World, for In-
stance, was such a Subject, as any uninspired Writer
would have dressed up, one would imagine, in all
the Pomp and Grandeur that the Art of Elocution
could devise; yet, in the Sacred Page, we find
only

SERM. only a plain Description of that great and important Event.^b No Reflections, no Sallies of Ad-

IX.

miration; but an even, uniform Relation, executed with the greatest Conciseness, and at the same time, in so satisfactory a Manner, that infinitely more is left for the Exercise of the Imagination than is expressed in Words. Had the Story of the Creation been a Subject for mere Man to have exerted his Talents upon, a whole Volume had not been sufficient for the Task; and yet we find in the Book of *Moses*, but one short Chapter set apart for that Purpose; and this Brevity will be thought the more remarkable, since no uninspired Person, had he been ever so learned, or ever so well acquainted with the various Circumstances of that great Work, could ever have told it with a better Grace.—*Longinus*, one of the most justly admired ancient Authors, could not help being charmed at the noble Simplicity of this Description, and records it as a distinguishing Instance of the Sublime. “The Jewish Legislator, says he, a
“Man of uncommon Parts, having possessed his
“Mind with an awful Idea of the Deity, as nobly
“declares it. In the Beginning of his Law, he
“has this Expression, *God said; what?* ^b *Let*
“*there be Light, and there was Light; let there be*
“*Earth, and it was so.*

“The Sacred ^d Writings are full of this Majestic
“Simplicity and unaffected Grandeur. Such as
“That recorded by *St. John*; ^e *Lazarus come forth.*
“And that by *St. Matthew*; ^f *Lord, if thou wilt*
“*thou canst make me clean.—I will, be thou clean.*
“And That again in *St. Mark*, where Christ hushes
“the

^b *Genesis*, chap. i. ^c See *Longinus*, de Sublimitate, Sect. IX.

^d *Smith's Longinus*, the Notes page 130. ^e *St. John* xi. 43.

^f *St. Matthew* viii. 3.

“ the tumultuous Sea into a Calm, with ^a *Peace*,
 “ *be still*. ^b The Waters heard that Voice which
 “ commanded universal Nature into Being: They
 “ sunk at his Command, who has the sole Privi-
 “ lege of saying to that unruly Element, ^c *‘Hither-*
 “ *to shalt thou come, and no further: Here shall*
 “ *thy proud Waves be stayed*.

Tho’ this noble Simplicity may likewise be found
 through all the Historical Parts of the Sacred Wri-
 tings, yet it is no where more conspicuous, than
 in the Adventures of *Joseph*. When that great
 Man, in order to sound his Brethren to the very
 Bottom, had restrained his Fondness for them so
 far, as to touch their Hearts by many severe
 Trials; when he had artfully brought them to the
 very Brink of Despair, he extorted a plain, but
 pathetic Relation from *Judah* of his Father’s
 Grief, upon parting with *Benjamin*, which he con-
 cluded with what cannot be so well expressed in
 any Words as his own. “ ^a Now therefore, I pray
 “ thee, let thy Servant abide instead of the Lad
 “ a Bondman to my Lord; and let the Lad go up
 “ with his Brethren. For how shall I go up to
 “ my Father, and the Lad be not with me? Lest
 “ peradventure I see the Evil that shall come on
 “ my Father?” The whole Speech is delivered in
 such a plain, and seemingly inartful Manner, and,
 at the same time, is so affecting, that it could not
 fail moving the Passions of any Man of a tender
 Disposition. And we are told it had the desired
 Effect; for “ ^b *Joseph* could not refrain himself
 “ before all them that stood by him; and he cried,
 “ Cause every man to go out from me: And there
 “ stood

^a St. Mark iv. 39.

^c Job xxxviii. 11.

^d Gen. xlv. 1. & seq.

^b Blackwall’s Sacred Classics.

^c Genesis xlv. 33. & seq.

SERM.

IX.

“ stood no Man with him while *Joseph* made himself known unto his Brethren. And he wept aloud; and the *Egyptians* and the House of *Pharaoh* heard. And *Joseph* said unto his Brethren, “ I am *Joseph*.— Doth my Father yet live?— “ And his Brethren could not answer him; for “ they were troubled at his Presence.” What an Assemblage of Ideas do these few Words convey to the intelligent Reader? What could so well paint *Joseph*’s Grief as his Behaviour on that Occasion? The News of such a Transaction being spread thro’ the Court of *Pharaoh*, is there expressed in the most concise, and yet comprehensive Manner, that can possibly be conceived. And the House of *Pharaoh* heard. But what shall we say, when we find so important a Discovery, as that which *Joseph* was to make to his Brethren, and the tender Concern of a dutiful Child, delivered in the plainest, and yet most pathetic Terms. I am *Joseph*: Doth my Father yet live? What a Scope is here left for the Imagination? For my Part, I cannot but think, the Reader must be in almost as great a Surprise as *Joseph*’s Brethren were, and unable to make answer. Every Word is important and interesting, and each deserves a Pause of Contemplation.

I cannot help offering another Instance of this noble Simplicity, which, I imagine, cannot be read but with the utmost Pleasure. ’Tis a Circumstance which *David* relates to *Saul*. The Occasion of it was this. *David* offered himself to oppose the *Philistine* Giant *Goliath*; *Saul* is surprised at the Boldness of the Attempt, upon the Consideration both of the Youth and Stature of *David*. But to remove all Objections of that Sort, *David* gives the following Account of his Com-

bat

bat with a Lion and a Bear. “¹ Thy Servant, said SERM.
 “ *he*, kept his Father’s Sheep; and there came a IX.
 “ Lion and a Bear, and took a Lamb out of the
 “ Flock; and I went out after him, and smote
 “ him, and delivered it out of his Mouth; and
 “ when he arose against me, I caught him by his
 “ Beard, and smote him, and slew him.” ^m This
 is surely the shortest, and most lively Description
 of such a dangerous Enterprize as ever was
 made. *I caught him by his Beard, and smote him,*
and slew him. Whoever compares this with any
 Passage of the like Nature in a profane Writer,
 must be charmed with the Modesty and Simplicity
 of it. The History of *David*, as told in the
 Sacred Books, is not only the most instructive, but
 the most entertaining Piece that ever was wrote;
 and his Book of *Psalms* may easily be proved to
 excell, in every Respect, the Poems of the most
 celebrated Ancients.

But what shall we say, when we turn our Eyes
 to the *New Testament*, where Beauty and Grandeur
 have taken their peculiar Residence? Surely, who-
 ever reads there our Saviour’s Sermon on the
 Mount; his various Parables, so well adapted to
 the Understanding of all Mankind, and, at the
 same time, full of the profoundest Truths; the
 solemn and pathetic Relation of the Death and
 Passion of the great Redeemer of the World; will
 be apt to think all other Writings of no Value,
 when set in Competition with these; will be ready
 to declare, that this is the precious Pearl, which,
 when a Man hath found, should he sell all he is
 worth to procure it, he would be an infinite
 Gainer.

¹ *Sam.* xvii. 34. & seq.

^m For a further Account of the Beauties of this little Story,
 I refer my Readers to the Life of King *David*, in 3 vols Octavo.

SERM. Gainer. The Travels and Pilgrimages of the A-

IX. postles, their courageous Behaviour, when called before Kings and Governors, as recorded in the *Acts*; the *Epistles* to the first Christian Converts, especially those of St. Paul, are wrote in such a Manner, as must, and have extorted the highest Encomiums from Infidelity itself.

To conclude: The Sacred Scriptures are not only the most necessary, but the most engaging Books that ever were composed: They greatly excell all the Writings of the most admired *Greeks* and *Romans*: Whatever is to be found remarkably beautiful in them, is here compleatly so; for this is the Fountain from whence they derived their most exalted Ideas; and those who are best acquainted here, are such as will be most admired as long as Learning or the World endures.

'Tis with Grief I am obliged to drop this agreeable Subject, tho' I am sensible I have not Abilities to pursue it in a Manner suitable to its Dignity; yet the more Instances I produce, the more I can call to my Remembrance; and indeed, 'tis no easy Task to pitch upon any in particular, where the Choice is so extensive. The Study of the Scriptures is like the Study of Nature, the nearer and more curious we are in our Researches, the more Scope we find for Wonder and Amazement; and we shall naturally be led, upon a Contemplation of either, to cry out, ^a *This is the Lord's Doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes.*

My next Discourse shall be employed, as I have promised, in a Proof of the Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, from the miraculous Accomplishment of the numerous Prophecies which are recorded therein.

SERM.

^a *Psalms* cxviii. 23.

SERMON X.

The Divine Authority of the Scriptures demonstrated from Prophecy.

2 St. PETER i. 21.

For the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man: But Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

NOT to take up your Time by an unnecessary Recapitulation of my former Arguments for the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, I shall proceed to prove this important Truth still further, by expatiating on the Assertion in my Text, and demonstrating, That *the Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man: But Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

The Prophecies, which we find recorded in Holy Writ, were not, like those of the ancient Oracles and Sybils, couch'd in such dark and obscure Terms, as would admit of any double or fallacious Meaning, but pronounced with all the Plainness and Perspicuity imaginable; nor were the Jews at any Time an over-credulous People, as the greater Part of the Heathens were, but on the contrary, very obstinate, and very hard to be convinced; and this is fully evident, from that Exclamation of the Prophet *Isaiab*, "Lord, who hath believed our Report?" It was for this very Reason,

* *Isaiab*, liii. 1. ^b *Matth.* xvi. 1. & seq. *Mark*, viii. 12.

SERM. Reason, that they demanded a Sign of our Saviour: And the *Woman of Samaria* had never acknowledged him as such, had he not gave her sufficient Proof of his being endowed with more than human Knowledge. In short, when we take a Survey of a few of the most known Prophecies, and find, by sufficient Testimonies, that they were accomplished long after the Decease of those who pronounced them, we must certainly entertain a most venerable Idea of those Holy Men, and set a high Value on their Writings, which have been miraculously transmitted to Posterity for the Conviction and Advantage of these latter Ages.

I shall begin with the Promise delivered unto *Abraham*. “^dThy Seed shall be a Stranger in a Land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred Years; and also that Nation, whom they shall serve will I judge: And in the fourth Generation they shall come hither again”. What Oracle did ever foretell any Thing in such direct Terms, so manifestly, and so long before it came to pass? And yet that Prophecy was in every Respect fulfilled at the appointed Time: And who can fairly charge it with the least Fallacy or Deceit? Since *Moses*, in his Pilgrimages with the Children of *Israel*, wholly relied on this Promise, it highly behoved him, doubtless, to speak of a Prediction, that was common among them, and handed down by uninterrupted Tradition from Father to Son. And moreover, as it was received by *Abraham*, so was it believed by *Moses*, and actually put in Execution by *Joshua*.

Jacob made his last Testament in *Egypt*, in which there are as many Prophecies as there are Words;

* *St. John*, iv. 7. & seq.

* *Genesis* xv. 13. & seq.

Words; not in regard to his own Children only, SERM.
 but to the Tribes likewise, that should owe their X.
 Rise to them. One Instance, I presume, will be
 sufficient. “*Judab*, thou art he, whom thy
 “ Brethren shall praise: thy Father’s Children shall
 “ bow down before thee. The Sceptre shall not
 “ depart from *Judab*, nor a Law-giver from be-
 “ tween his Feet, until *Shilob* come.” The true
 and genuine Meaning of which Prophecy was ever
 held by the *Hebrews* to be this; that the Sceptre
 was to remain in the Possession of *Judab*, and that
 the sovereign Jurisdiction was to be lodged in him,
 until the Coming of the *Messiah*. Now *Reuben*,
Simeon, and *Levi* were the eldest Brethren of *Ja-*
cob’s House; and therefore this remarkable Pas-
 sage was directly repugnant to the Order of Na-
 ture. Moreover, *Moses*, who led the People of
Israel out of *Egypt*, was of the Tribe of *Levi*, and
Joshua, who brought them into the Land of *Ca-*
naan, of the Tribe of *Ephraim*. The *Judges* were
 sometimes of one Tribe, and sometimes of ano-
 ther. And *Saul*, the first King that was elected
 by the People, was of the Tribe of *Benjamin*,
 which was the youngest of them all. These Cir-
 cumstances, doubtless, gave a cruel Shock to the
 Prophecy. The Sceptre, however, in a short
 Time, passed from *Saul* to *David*; from a King to
 a young Shepherd of *Judab*, where it was firmly
 fixed, notwithstanding the heavy Murmurs and
 Complaints of the other Tribes against it.

If it should here be demanded, how shall we be
 assured that *Jacob* said any such Thing? Is it not
 natural, as well as rational to reply, that the same
 Credit ought to be given to this History, as

K 2

to

SERM. to any other; and who presumes to dispute the

X. Authority of that Writer, who has maintained his Character unspotted, thro' a long Series of Ages? This, however, hath further Evidence. For 'tis *Moses* who records this Prophecy; and what End could he propose to answer by so doing, as he was of the Tribe of *Levi*? If he did this out of Favour or Affection to *Judah*, why was he not afraid of disobliging, not only *Reuben*, but *Siméon* and *Levi*? Or what Reason can be assigned, why he did not rather chuse to make the Prophecy fall on the Tribe of *Levi*, since that would have added Weight to his Authority? Nay, what Gratification, what Act of Indulgence could this be even to *Judah*, since that Tribe was then excluded, and had no Share in it till a thousand Years afterwards? When all these Circumstances shall be duly considered, this Prophecy has most assuredly all the Evidence of the Spirit of God, that can reasonably be desired.

In the Blessings which *Jacob* conferred on his Posterity, he points out the several Parts that should be allotted to each of his Children in the Land of *Canaan*, as if he himself had been in the actual Possession of them: To one he assigns the Seacoast; to another the Corn-Country; and to a third the Vineyards; in the very same Manner, as they were some hundred of Years afterwards divided amongst them. Now, how could this be, but by the all-wise Direction of the Sovereign Disposer of all Things? But when we read, that *Jacob* in blessing the Children of *Joseph*, preferred *Ephraim* the younger Son, before *Manasses* the Elder, and that, when he was warned thereof with

SERM. to any other; and who presumes to dispute the
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 Elder, and that, when he was warned thereof
 with

with some Concern by their Father, his Answer SERM.
 was; "I know it my Son, I know it; he also X.
 "shall become a People, and he also shall be great:
 "But truly his younger Brother will be greater
 "than he, and his Seed shall become a Multi-
 "tude of Nations." What Motive could induce
Jacob to say so, and *Moses* to report it?

As for *Moses*, he is continually reminding the People of the Conquest of *Canaan*, according to the Promise, and therefore this Prophecy must needs be well known among them. Moreover, *Moses* portions out the Land, as if they had it already in Possession; nominates proper Arbitrators to make the just Partitions for them; prescribeth Laws for their Establishment, and the Regulation of their future Conduct; lays them down a Plan, or Plat-form of their several Cities, Suburbs, and Houses, which they should erect; injoineth them the tilling their Grounds, their resting on the Seventh Year, their publick Festivals and other Solemnities; and appointeth Cities of Refuge for such as should be guilty of casual Manslaughters. This was acting as if the Country was already in their Hands. And yet what Likelihood was there that they should ever be Masters of that Land, when they burned Bricks in *Egypt*, or when they lingered in the Wilderness? Or, indeed, at the Return of the Men that were sent to spy out the Land, when they reported nothing but the Beauty of the Place, and the Intrepidity of the People? Suppose a Man should at this Day portion out *Italy*, or *Russia*, among us in his Imagination, and assign to every one of us our proportional Share; would he not expose himself to the utmost Contempt, and be the just Object of Derision? And yet, *Moses* himself never entered into that Land, and those who waited for it died in the Way. At the Time ap-

SERM. pointed, however, the *Canaanites* gave Place. Now,

X. is it reasonable to suppose, that the People would ever have followed *Moses*, or that *Moses*, who might have been so well provided for in the Court of *Pharaoh*, would ever have attempted to lead them thro' such a long Series of uninterrupted Distresses, had they not been well assured that the Promise came from God himself? But *Moses* proceedeth still further; for as he foresaw that they would become Masters of *Canaan*; so he foreknew that they would offend the Almighty, by serving *Baal*, after they were in Possession. He foresaw that they would ungratefully forget their God; and that God, however, even in his Wrath, would remember Mercy. He foresaw that they would be dispersed, and scattered over the Face of the whole Earth, and be trodden under the Feet of Strangers. In short, he foresaw that God would call the *Gentiles* into his Church in their Stead; yea, and all these future Events were revealed to him so clearly, that he enumerates them in his Song, which he earnestly desired might be handed down to latest Posterity, as a Witness against them, and a Vindication of his own Conduct. Tho' from the Top of Mount *Nebo*, he could take a Survey of the Land of *Canaan*, and give such a lively Description of it; yet from what Mountain could he discern the Intentions of Mens Hearts, who were yet unborn? In what Book could he meet with such Secrets, as lay deep in the Womb of Time, but in the Book of Life; or in other Terms, but by Divine Revelation? Let us add to this, that what was so foretold by *Moses* was punctually performed by *Joshua*, without the least Addition or Diminution; which is a very strong Presumption that *Joshua* did not so

much

much obey *Moses*, as the Word of God which SERM.
XV
was spoken by him.

The Curse which *Joshua* pronounced against the Man that should build *Jericho* is too remarkable to be passed over in Silence. "He shall lay the Foundation thereof in his First-born, and in his youngest Son shall he set up the Gates of it." That is to say, he shall be punished with the sudden Death of his Children, "Hiel of Bethel built up *Jericho*, he laid the Foundation thereof in *Abiram* his First-born, and set up the Gates thereof in his youngest Son *Segub*. And the *Book of Kings* further saith, it was according to the Word of the Lord, which he spake by *Joshua*, the Son of *Nun*."

In the *Books* of *Joshua* and *Judges*, we find the Accomplishment of those Events which were foretold by *Moses*, and the Promises, as well as Denunciations, in every Respect fulfilled. For, according as the People of *Israel* either turned away from, or sought the Lord, God raised up Tyrants in *Canaan*, or Deliverers in *Israel*. And the *Books* of *Samuel*, *Kings*, and the *Prophets*, were either Predictions of what was to happen hereafter, or the Effects of Prophecies actually past. In short, during the whole Course of Sacred History, there is no Season to be found without both Prophet and Prophecy. And were we but better acquainted with the Persons, Places, and State of Affairs at that Time, than we are, we should have a more lively and adequate Idea of these Things, and since these Helps are wanting, we need not wonder, that the Generality of Mankind read those remarkable Transactions with so much Remissness and Disregard.

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I shall

* *Joshua*, vi. 26.

^h *1 Kings*, xvi. 34.

SERM.

X.

I shall proceed to another remarkable Prophecy, from whence I hope you may frame to yourselves some Conclusions of the utmost Importance. When ¹Jeroboam, the Son of Nebat, made the ten Tribes fall away from Rehoboam, the Son of Solomon, that they should have no Occasion to return to their Allegiance by resorting to Jerusalem to worship there, he reared an Altar in Betbel, contrary to the Law of God. “^{*} And behold, saith the History, there came a Man of God out of Judah, by the Word of the Lord unto Betbel: And he cried against the Altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold, a Child shall be born unto the House of David, Jeshab by Name, and upon thee shall he offer the Priests of the high Places, that burn Incense upon thee, and Mens Bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a Sign the same Day, saying, This is the Sign which the Lord hath spoken. Behold, the Altar shall be rent, and the Ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.” This Prophecy was fulfilled in each individual Article by Jeshab three hundred Years afterwards. When ¹Jeshab, according to our History, had so done, he saw a certain Tomb, and asked whose it was, intending to have burnt the Bones of him that lay there, as he had done those of the other Priests in Betbel, but when he was informed, that it was the Tomb of the Man of God, who had foretold those Things so many Years ago, he forbade any Man to touch it. Besides, as this Prophecy was written some Time before the Coming of Jeshab, it could be no Forgery; for who could have been so very fortunate, as to hit upon his Name? And, if it was written after, and devised

¹ 1 Kings, xii. ^{*} 1 Kings, xiii. 2, 3. [†] 2 Kings, xxiii. 17, 18.

derived upon the Event; how came the said SERM.
Tomb to be made at the same Instant? Or, was X.
there no easier Method to be found? Would it
not have been sufficient to have said, One *Josias* shall
come, &c. without making mention either of the
Death of the Man of God, or of his Meeting with
the Lion, or of his Conversation with the Pro-
phet of *Samaria*? Would not what is here re-
lated have discovered the Fraud, had there been
one? And would not the *Samaritans* have been able
to trace the Tomb from its Original? But this
Prophecy is so very punctual in all Respects, both
as to Name, Place, and Circumstance, that the
Denial of its Divine Author would be absurd to
the last Degree. And, as a further Confirmation
of the Purity of the said Scripture, we find it re-
corded, that this very Man of God was slain by a
Lion for turning back to eat with the Prophet of
Samaria, contrary to the Word of the Lord: Now,
how very improbable is it, that he should be the
Author of a Forgery or Lye, who, to tell the
Truth, did not scruple to dishonour the Remem-
brance of so great a Prophet, and whose Sincerity,
in such a Variety of Circumstances, was so very
apparent?

Isaiab, in those Events which he foretelleth
concerning the Kingdom of the *Messias*, and the
Calling of the *Gentiles*, seems rather an Evange-
list, than a Prophet. And when he threatneth
Jerusalem with the Captivity of *Babylon*, or con-
soles them with the Hopes of their Deliverance,
he utters his Predictions, as One, who had been an
Eye-witness to them both: For he saith not, *The*
Lord will do,—*The Lord will call*,—*The Lord will*
destroy, &c.—But *He doth*,—*He calleth*,—*He de-*
stroyeth.

SAM. *Proverbs*. — Nay, and oftentimes — *He hath done,*

X. — *He hath called, — He hath destroyed,* and so forth;

as though he spake not of Things that were but only near their Accomplishment.

However, if any should still cavil at those Prophecies, I would ask, by what Spirit could *Isaiab* say, “I am the Lord that maketh all Things;” “that saith of *Cyrus*, ‘He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my Pleasure; even saith to *Jerusalem*, thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy Foundation shall be laid? And again;” “Thus saith the Lord to his Anointed, to *Cyrus*, whose Right-hand I have holden, to subdue Nations before him; and I will loose the Loins of Kings to open before him the two-leaved Gates, and the Gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked Places straight: I will break in Pieces the Gates of Brass, and cut in sunder the Bars of Iron; and I will give thee the Treasures of Darkness, and hidden Riches of secret Places; that thou mayest know, that I the Lord, which call thee by thy Name, am the God of *Israel*. For *Jacob* my Servant’s Sake, and *Israel* mine Elect, I have even called thee by thy Name: I have furnished thee, though thou hast not known me.”

How many Wonders do these few Words contain? In what lofty and remarkable Forms are the Actions which this great Prince was to perform, and the Deliverance he was destined to bring about in Favour of the People of *Israel*, described? And how punctually did the Almighty perform his Promise, by putting the mightiest Kingdoms of the Earth under his Subjection?

The

¹ *Isaiab*, xlii. 28. ² *Isaiab*, xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

THE Prophet *Isaiab*, with great Exactness fore-
tells, not only the Captivity of the People of *Is-* SERM.
X.
rael, the Sacking of the City, and the Overthrow
of the Temple; but also the Destruction of the
Chaldeans by the *Persians*, and the building up of
Jerusalem, and the Temple, by them again. Sup-
pose we should allow it possible for a Man to have
a tolerable Foresight of Events, the Accomplish-
ment whereof is near at hand, yet surely, with the
deepest Penetration, he cannot see some Hundreds
of Years before him, nor pry into Affairs, during
the whole Continuance of a mighty Monarchy, as
Isaiab doth, who calleth *Cyrus* by his Name, a
Hundred Years before he was born, to deliver *Is-*
rael. Let the greatest Enemies of the Truth con-
sult their own Consciences, and tell me, what art-
ful Contrivance, what Stratagem there could be in
those Things? They cannot say, these Prophecies
were forged upon the Event. For by the Remo-
val of the *Jews* to *Babylon*, the Laws, Prophe-
cies, and Writings of *Israel*, which were common
among that People, were conveyed into divers
Places of the World; among which they had this
Prophecy before *Cyrus* was born. And as this was
in divers Mens Hands, it was impossible to be a
Forgery.

Moreover, the Prophets *Jeremiab* and *Ezekiel*,
tho' they were in Places far remote from each o-
ther, the one in *Jerusalem*, the other in Captivity
at *Babylon*, foretell the very same Events. *Jer-*
emiab, however, is the more wonderful in this Par-
ticular; for he prophesieth expressly, that the Peo-
ple which were carried away Captive, should be
brought Home again at the End of ^a threescore
and ten Years, notwithstanding the Improbability
of

^a *Jeremiab*, xxv.

SERM. of such a Revolution: And yet he asserts it with
 X. such Confidence, that one might say, he led them
 by the Hand into *Jerusalem*. And the Event was
 answerable; for, at the Expiration of that Term,
 the People were carried Home again, as if *Cyrus*
 had been sent on Purpose to verify the Prophet's
 Predictions.

The Prophecies of *Daniel* likewise cannot but
 be a very convincing Argument of the Divine
 Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, since they are
 so very plain, that he rather seemeth an Historian,
 than a Prophet; for he speaketh of the Tyranny
 of *Antiochus*, the Profanation of the Temple,
 and several other important Articles, which came
 to pass some Hundreds of Years after his Decease,
 as of Transactions some Time past. And if there
 be any so scrupulous, as to dispute the *Jewish*
 Chronicles, wherein 'tis recorded, that the Pro-
 phesy of *Daniel* was read to *Alexander* the Great,
 when he first entered *Jerusalem*, to shew him what
 was foretold of him; yet it cannot be denied, but
 that, when *Ptolemy* caused the Scriptures to be
 translated, the Prophecy of *Daniel* was extant, and
 was translated with the Residue, long before the
 Tyranny of *Antiochus*, which is as plain a Proof
 of its Validity as can be required.

I shall pass by a Multitude of the Prophecies of
Daniel, to make room for the Mention of one in-
 particular, which was very surprizing and truly
 remarkable. In the very first Year of the Reign
 of *Darius*, *Daniel* said unto him, "Behold, there
 " shall stand up yet three Kings in *Persia*, and
 " the fourth shall be far richer than they all: And
 " by his Strength, through his Riches, he shall
 " stir up all against the Realm of *Grecia*." These
 few

¹ *Daniel*, xi. 2. & seq.

few Words contain the History of near one Hundred and threescore Years. Now, could the wisest Man on Earth foresee how many Kings should succeed him on the Throne, and much less foretell the Actions of the fourth. But hear him further:

“And a mighty King, *said he*, shall stand up, that shall rule with great Dominion, and do according to his Will.” How plainly doth this point out *Alexander's* coming out of *Greece* against *Darius*? “And when he shall stand up, *said he*, his Kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided towards the four Winds of Heaven, and not to his Posterity; for his Kingdom shall be plucked up.” What Historian could have painted the Monarchy of *Alexander* in more lively Colours, which was but as a Flash of Lightning, that passeth from the West unto the East, and concluded in itself, since 'twas divided into many Kingdoms, as *Macedonia*, *Thrace*, *Syria*, and *Egypt*, and conferred on Princes that were not of his Race? Had any one been disposed to have made an Abstract of the History of the Monarchy of *Greece*, he could not have done it in more proper Words than the foregoing.

Since these Things are beyond Dispute, what Manner of Men must they be, who oppose themselves to such full Conviction; and will not allow those Writings to come from God, which bear such an incontestible Stamp of their Divine Original;

Any one will easily perceive, that other Prophecies, as remarkable as these, might have been added, could they have been comprised within the short Compass of a Sermon. The Destruction of *Babylon* would have furnished me with very convincing Arguments for the Validity of the Sacred Scriptures; but for Brevity sake, I shall refer my Readers to *Rollin's* Ancient History, Vol. II. where they will meet with entire Satisfaction in this Particular.

SERM. ginal; and record such Things, as neither Men nor
 X. Angels could ever pry into, and nothing less than
 infinite Knowledge could foretell?

I have purposely declined speaking of the many Prophecies relating to the Mission of *St. John the Baptist*, or the Life, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Blessed Redeemer; because, as those momentous Articles are so well known, a Repetition of them would be needless to those, who either attend the Service of the Church, or consult the Sacred Scriptures in their Closets; and if any have hitherto been incurious in Affairs of so high a Concern, they cannot fail of meeting with sufficient Satisfaction, if they will but be persuaded to make proper Inquiries.

Having laid before you this incontestible Evidence of the Divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, it will be needless, I presume, to enlarge on this Topick for the Confirmation of it. It will be no small Satisfaction, however, to the serious Believer, to consider the Purity of the Gospel-Docctrine; the Forgiveness of Injuries, which is there so strongly insisted upon, and that brotherly Love, which is there likewise so pathetically recommended, as to be made the Badge of our Profession: Such Arguments as these must doubtless have their proper Weight; and upon a Comparison of the Christian System with that of any other, we must earnestly cry out, with *St. Peter*,
"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the Words of eternal Life."

To conclude,—Tho' I have brought a Variety of other Arguments to demonstrate the Divine Authority

¹ See the Prophet *Isaiab* throughout, and compare him with the Gospels.

² *St. John* vi. 68.

Authority of the Sacred Books; yet the Prophecies therein recorded, and the Testimony of other Authors concerning the Completion of them, is, in my Opinion, so full a Proof, that none but Men of the most consummate Obstinacy can withstand such strong Conviction.—Let us therefore, with the Apostle in my Text, boldly maintain, that *The Prophecy came not in old Time by the Will of Man; but Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

SERM.
X.



SERMON

S E R M O N XI.

The Christian Religion demonstrated,
from the Writings of the New
Testament.

ACTS xxvi. 26.

This Thing was not done in a Corner.

SERM.
XI.

THE fair and open Manner in which the Gospel was first propagated, is such a convincing Evidence of the Truth of it, that no one, in my Opinion, can with Reason require a greater. For as our Blessed Lord was conscious of his own Uprightness and Integrity, he was not fond of doing Things in secret, but proclaimed his Doctrines in the most frequented Places, the open Streets, the Markets, and the Synagogues, and performed his Miracles before Multitudes of People; of whom many were his most inveterate Enemies, so that there could be no Opportunity for the least Fallacy or Collusion. For which Reason, St. Paul, after a most eloquent Defence of the Christian Faith before King Agrippa, concludes with the Words of my Text; *This Thing was not done in a Corner.*

Tho' the Arguments which are brought to demonstrate the Truth of the Christian Religion from the miraculous Operations of the all-powerful Son of God, are so well known, and the Inferences to be drawn from thence are so very obvious, that I need not, I presume, dwell long upon

upon that Topic; yet I cannot forbear observing, SERM.
 that *Mabomet*, that grand Impostor, industriously XI.
 declined this Proof, and never attempted to work
 his Miracles before any Number of People; but
 rather chose to establish his Religion by the Dint
 of the Sword: And as to the pretended Miracles
 of the *Romish* Church, some of them are such art-
 less, such barefaced Impositions, that the Performers
 themselves must be perfectly ashamed of; and
 others of a more weighty and momentous Nature
 are wrought only before a few select Friends,
 whose Interest it may probably be to propagate
 the Delusion. The Miracles however of our Blest
 Saviour, namely, his raising the Dead, his re-
 storing Sight to the Blind, and his instantaneously
 healing the Sick and the Lame, were not only too
 great in their Nature to be counterfeited, but those
 Cures were performed upon such Objects as were
 universally known; and Many of them, such as
 had laboured under their grievous Infirmities for
 many Years. When this infallible Physician was
 followed by great Multitudes, he would frequently
 heal all that made their Applications to him, were
 they never so many; and as such wonderful Ope-
 rations were too evident to be the Effect of Delu-
 sion; so we find the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, tho'
 his most implacable Adversaries, have not once
 the Assurance to call in Question the Truth of
 them, but only look on him with an evil Eye, and
 reproach

* Such as the Woman that was diseased with an Issue of
 Blood 12 Years. — *Mat. ix. 10.* The Man who had a wi-
 thered Hand. — *Mark iii. 21.* *Bartimeus* the blind Beggar. —
Mark x. 46. The Man who had an Infirmary 38 Years, lying
 at the Pool of *Bethesda*. — *John v. 5.* The Man that was born
 blind. — *John ix. 1, & seq.* and many others of the like
 Nature.

SAM. reproach him for performing such Cures on the Sabbath Day. And, in like Manner, as his Actions were publick, so were the Doctrines which he taught; inasmuch, that when the High Priest questioned him concerning them, he made the following Reply without the least Hesitation: *I spake openly to the World; I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in Secret have I said nothing: Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them: Behold! they know what I have said.*

Having made these previous Observations, in the further Prosecution of this Discourse, I shall take a transient View of the most material Acts of our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles; and shall insist upon such only, as were most publick, and so well attested, that the greatest Adversaries to the Christian Cause were obliged, tho' with Reluctance, to acknowledge they were true.

It must be confessed, indeed, that our Lord *Jesus Christ* has not left behind him the least Account either of his Life or Doctrines under his own Hand; but then his Apostles and Disciples, influenced and assisted by his *Holy Spirit*, have transmitted to us a true and faithful Narrative of Both, in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles: All which, when put together, are distinguished by the Name or Title of the *New Testament*. And that those Writings are genuine and authentick, every impartial and unprejudiced Reader must readily allow, when he considers, that the Composers of them were living at the same Time that those Things which they record were transacted, and were Eye-witnesses themselves of the real

Facts;

Facts. And tho' they were far distant from one another when they composed their respective Accounts, yet they unanimously agree in every Article of any Moment or Importance; and when they had finished them, they openly and boldly taught and preached up the Truths therein contained, whilst there were Thousands living who could prove the Facts; nay, whilst their Enemies were living, who would gladly have embraced the least Opportunity to confute them. Moreover, so zealous were these Historians to justify the Truths which they recorded, that they seal'd them with their Blood, in almost all Parts of the World. And we read of no other Composition, no other Record whatever, tho' it related to the most absolute Monarchy, and tho' never so many Potentates and Princes endeavoured to establish its Reputation, that was so boldly, so courageously defended. Their Design was not, like that of the Generality of Mankind, to flatter, and by that Means to insinuate themselves into the good Graces of some powerful Prince. For had *Jesus* been a mere Man, they could have proposed no Advantage to themselves in flattering him after his Crucifixion: Neither could they be Persons who wrote for Gain; since they freely parted with all that this World holds dear, nay their very Lives, in Defence of their Writings.

If we examine the Style of them, we shall find it plain, easy, and familiar. Therein the Divinity of Christ is peremptorily asserted, and yet the Infirmities of his Humanity are no ways concealed: Therein are the Infirmities of his Humanity acknowledged, and yet his Divinity is not any ways destroyed: Therein the Frailties and Miscarriages of the Apostles themselves, such as their too curious Disposition, their Ambition, and the like, are

SHOWN faithfully recorded; and, in a Word, not the least

XI. Ostentation of themselves or pompous Panegyrick

on their Master is therein to be found. *Peter*, we are told, shamefully fell, and denied his Lord no less than thrice, within the Compass of a few Hours. Now, why should his Disciple *Mark*, who composed his Gospel by his Direction, record his Weakness and expose him? The Sons of *Zebedee*, *John* and *James*, desire to sit the one on the Right-hand of *Jesus*, and the other on his Left, in his Kingdom. What Obligation did they lie under to publish these private Miscarriages, the Discovery of which might in all human Probability lessen the Reputation and Authority of their Writings? They acknowledge, that *Jesus* himself was sometimes weary, sometimes thirsty, and often in Tears; all which are common Infirmities incident to human Nature; yet no less strenuously do they assert him to be God, and chearfully lay down their Lives in Defence of his Divinity. But might they not have concealed these Infirmities of his without the least Prejudice to the Truth? Doubtless they might; and any one, in the common Course of Thinking, would imagine, that such a Procedure might have highly advanced it: But they were Men of deeper Penetration, and were fully persuaded, that the bright Rays of his Godhead would shine forth with the greater Lustre, even thro' the dark Vail of his Manhood. In a Word, they set down every minute Circumstance, such as the Time, the Place, the Day, the Hour, the Town, and House, nay the very Names of the Persons. Now the more particular they were, the more liable doubtless they were to be detected and disproved. Besides, they talk not in *Judea* of Transactions in the *Indies*, but in *Bethany*, *Bethsaida*, and *Jerusalem* itself; they point out the very Street,

the

the Gate, the Pool, where such and such Miracles were wrought before Witnesses who were then living; the Blind saw, the Lame walked, and the Dead arose, &c. Now, had they asserted a Falsehood, how easily had they been detected? What Opportunities did they give their Enemies to triumph over them? And yet, among so many *Pharisees*, so inveterate, and so enraged against them; among so many People, so ready and willing, both to say and do the utmost that the most bitter Malice could prompt them to; how came it to pass, that not One should rise up in Judgment against them? Since therefore Spleen and Ill-nature are too apt to cast Reflections, and find Fault where there is no just Occasion; and since the most inveterate Envy and Hatred of their Enemies, who lived in the Places where those Wonders were transacted, and at a Time too, when their Power and Authority carried all before them, could not find the minutest Circumstance misrepresented, we must naturally conclude, that the History of the Gospel is unquestionably true, genuine, and authentick.

However, to satisfy the obstinate Incredulity of some unreasonable Men, I shall further proceed to demonstrate the Truth of such Transactions in the History of our Blessed Lord and Saviour, as have been thought the most exceptionable. Now, we are told in the Gospel, * that when *Jesus* was born in *Betlehem*, the Wise-Men saw a Star in the East, which went before them, and conducted them to the Place where the Infant lay.

There are some perhaps who will absolutely deny, that there ever was such a Star: But let any

* St. *Mat.* ii. 1, & seq.

SERMON one judge how little the Evangelist must raise his
 XI. own Credit, and advance his Master's Interest, by
 setting out with an apparent Falshood, which all
 the World could have disproved. But we read
 that, at the same Time, ⁴ (*Augustus* being then the
 chief President of the Sports that were celebrated
 in Honour to *Venus Genitrix* at Rome) there ap-
 peared a Comet, or blazing Star, in the Heavens;
 for so they called all uncommon and extraordinary
 Stars: Whereupon, the College of Priests, on Ac-
 count of the singular and peculiar Marks of it,
 past this Judgment, that it did not prognosticate,
 as most do, either War, Pestilence or Famine, but
 the Salvation of all Mankind. And ⁵ *Charemon*,
 the *Stoick* Philosopher, being likewise of Opinion
 that this Star presaged some future Happiness, and
 finding that his Gods droop'd at its Appearance,
 travelled into *Judea*, with some other Astrologers,
 to find out the True God. *Chalcidius* too, the *Pla-*
tonist, says, in direct Terms, that the *Chaldeans*
 made this Observation, that it foretold the sudden
 Appearance of God upon Earth, in order to pour
 down the Dew of his heavenly Benediction on all
 Mankind.

Now, upon the Enquiry of the Wise-Men,
⁶ *Herod* was resolutely bent on the Murder of all
 the Children in *Bethlehem*, and the Parts adjacent,
 who were two Years old and under, taking it for
 granted, that by such a Procedure he should de-
 stroy that Child among the rest, which the Star re-
 ferred to. In this barbarous and inhuman Action
 he spared not even his own Child. Upon which
 Account, ⁷ *Macrobius* records this witty Turn of
Augustus,

⁴ *Plin. lib. ii. cap. 25.*

⁵ *Origen adversus Celsum.*

⁶ *St. Mat. ii. 16.*

⁷ *Macrobius in Sat.*

Augustus, that he had rather be Herod's Hog, than his Son. SERM. XI.

The next Difficulty that occurs to us, is this, that Christ should be born of a Virgin. But since God had^b foretold it, who should prevent its coming to pass? And who can question his Power, when he is fully assured of his Will? But this Prophecy was so very remarkable, that^c *Simon Magus*, not to be thought in any respect inferior to *Jesus*, assured his Disciples that he was the Son of a Virgin; a Thing which the blessed *Jesus* never published of himself. Moreover, we read, that the Temple of *Peace* fell down to the Ground, that very Day at *Rome*, at the Foundation whereof, the Oracle of *Apollo* being consulted by the *Romans*, the Answer was, *That it should stand till a Virgin should be with Child, and have a Son*, which they misconstrued for the Promise of an eternal Duration.

As to *St. John Baptist*, our Lord's Harbinger and Herald, his holy Life, his exalted Piety, his Doctrine, and his Death, are all recorded in *Josephus's* History, much to the same Purpose as they are in our *Evangelists*. And, if we look into the Life of *Christ*, we shall find it one continued Scene of Miracles. This Consideration, however, that all his Actions were described and published with so many particular Circumstances, the least of which could no ways be contested, should alone

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^a *Isaiah* vii. 14.

^b *St. Epiphanius* says expressly, that the first Heresy was set on Foot by *Simon the Magician*, who pretended to be the great Power and Virtue of God, sent from Heaven to Earth. Among the *Samaritans* he made himself pass for God the Father, and among the *Jews* for God the Son. He patched up a Kind of Medley-System out of the Philosophy of *Plato*, the religious Tables of the Heathens, and Christianity. See *Chambers's* Dictionary, under the Article *Simonians*.

^c *Josephus*, lib. xviii. cap. 7.

SEAM. be sufficient to strengthen and confirm our Faith.

XI. For which Reason, I shall now proceed to his Death.

"From the sixth Hour unto the ninth Hour there was Darkness over all the Earth, that is, at Noon-day. If any one doubts of the Truth of this Fact, * *Pblygon*, *Adrian's* Freed-man, the most exact and curious Chronologer of his Time, hath observed, that there was an unnatural Eclipse of the Sun, attended with a violent Earthquake, in the eighteenth Year of the Reign of *Tiberius*, in which our Lord and Saviour was crucified. And *Eusebius* assures us, that he has met with the same Observation in some of the Heathen Historians. *Lucian* also, one of the Priests of *Antioch*, refers the Judges who condemned him to their own *Annals*. "You'll find it recorded, says he, that in " *Pilate's* Time, an unnatural Darkness covered " the Earth at Mid-day, and the Sun withdrew " his Light, ashamed to see his Maker suffer." And, as to the Earthquake that immediately ensued, *Pblygon* before mentioned speaks of it in much the same Terms as our *Evangelists* do, and ascribes it to the Eclipse. Now, since Accidents like these so very seldom happen, and since these are allowed to fall out in one and the same Year, and about the same Time, they cannot rationally be supposed to be any other, than those our Authors treat of. In a Word, the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain: As to the giving Credit to, or disbelieving this Assertion, there required no more than a Journey to the Place to be fully convinced. But *Josephus*, speaking of the ill Omens that portended

* *Mat.* xxvii. 45. *Mark* xv. 33.

* *Pblygon Trallianus*, *Chron.* lib. 13.

tended the Destruction of the *Jews*, takes particular Notice of this as one. SERM.
XI.

Behold the Lord of Life is dead! But then the third Day he riseth again, according to his own Prediction. Had he said, as *Mahomet* did, about eight hundred Years hence, I'll visit you again, then he had safely kept them in Suspence till the Expiration of that Term: But since he says, within three Days I will come again, the Fallacy, if it had been such, had soon been plainly detected. Women saw him, the Incredulous felt him, he eat, drank, and conversed with them at several Times, and for several Days successively. The Apostles, tho' at first startled and astonished at it, preach'd it, publish'd it, and at last sealed it with their Blood. Even He, whom a simple Servant-maid confounded; even He, who in his Master's Life-time denied him thrice in one Hour, preached him, and proclaimed his Resurrection in *Jerusalem* before the Magistrates and Priests; and no Persuasions, no Menaces could deter him from the Publication of it. Had he perished in the Grave, what Advantage could be reaped or expected from his lifeless Corps? And had not *Jesus* been alive, whence this sudden Courage, this ardent Zeal, this strong and unaccountable Impulse? Had not *Jesus* spoke in him, who would have put any Trust or Confidence in what he said; at least so far as, upon his bare Word, to preach, publish, and seal his Affirmation with their Blood?

Moreover, the very Objections of our Enemies serve only to set the Truth in a fairer and more advantageous Point of Light. To this End the *Jews* pretend, that his Disciples stole away his Body by Night;

SERM. Night; because they could not find it. But the
 XI. Method that was taken to secure it fully confutes
 such a preposterous Tale. Some Heathens gave
 out, that they crucified a Spectre, or Ghost, in-
 stead of *Jesus*: But this Notion the *Jews* unani-
 mously condemn; for they were scandalized at his
 Death, and believed that he did actually suffer.
 Upon which Account, they commonly call him the
crucified Man.

Christ lived therefore, and lives forever; and
 sent down (in Pursuance of his ^P Promise to his
 Disciples before his Death) the *Holy Ghost* upon
 them. A little Time after his Resurrection,
 they received the *Gift* of *Tongues* in so singular a
 Manner, that the same Gift, by the Imposition of
 their Hands, descended on many others. This is
 another Article which obstinate and wilful Men
 carp at. As if God Almighty could not, if he
 pleased, with the same Ease bestow the Gifts of
 many Languages upon one Man, as confound and
 divide one Language into a great many, as he did
 in the Infancy of the World, to testify his divine
 Displeasure. But had it been only a Bravado, and
 a Piece of Ostentation, as they vainly surmise,
 what Ends could they propose to themselves in it?
 How easily, how readily had they been confuted
 and disproved? They were in the Custody of the
 Magistrates and Judges; why were they not ex-
 amined before the People? *Jerusalem* was the Me-
 tropolis of all the *East*, where could they better
 have detected the *Imposture*, or forced them to a Re-
 cantation? But the Certainty of the Narration
 plainly appears from the Effects of it. For the
 Apostles themselves, and their Disciples, tho'
 originally

originally no more than Fishermen, and Publicans, a Set of ignorant, illiterate Men, that understood no other Language than their own, and were no great Criticks very probably in that, yet composed divers Books, travelled over the greatest Part of the World, and preached with Majesty and Power to all Nations. How would either the *Jews* or *Gentiles* have approved of such Men as these for their Orators? And yet so successful were they in their Labours, that, in less than forty Years, the Name and Doctrine of the Lord *Jesus* was not only preached, but embraced in most Parts of the habitable World. And how could they possibly have effected this, if they had not by some extraordinary Means, some supernatural Assistance, attained to a perfect Knowledge of the Languages? And this Story was so common, so universally believed, that *Simon Magus* before-mentioned assured his Disciples, that he was the very Person that descended on the Apostles in fiery Tongues.

Let us now look a little into the History of *St. Paul*. He was the Disciple of *Gamaliel*, and was sent to *Damascus* with an unlimited Commission to persecute the Christians. In his Journey, a sudden Light shone around him, and falling on his Face to the Ground, he heard a Voice, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* In a Word, immediately of a *Jew*, he became a Christian, and of a Persecutor, a Martyr. And, if you will not believe *St. Luke*, in the *Acts*, *Paul* himself confirms this Circumstance in several other Places. Now what Objection can Incredulity itself raise against this, except perhaps a bare Denial? Our Apostle has a very fair Prospect of advancing him-

SERM.

XI

self, and is in great Favour with the Magistrates and Priests: All on a sudden he changes his Course of Life, runs to the other Extreme, and patiently submits himself to be reviled, scourged, beaten, stoned, and put to death. Suppose now neither *St. Luke* nor *St. Paul* had disclosed the true Reason of this sudden Alteration, would not any one naturally conclude, that some extraordinary internal Impulse had induced him to it? But here it may be said, we daily find by Experience, that Men alter their Opinions upon very slight and trivial Occasions. None surely but Fools or Madmen. But *St. Paul* weighs the Matter maturely; first argues the Case, lays down Axioms, and draws undeniable Conclusions from them. The most learned of his Enemies pity him, indeed, for the Misapplication, as they call it, of his Learning, but admire his Writings. Moreover, he knew that his Preaching would be by some accounted Folly, but as great a Folly as it was, 'twas the very Wisdom of the Almighty; that the Continuation of it would reduce him to Poverty, and the worst of worldly Misfortunes, but yet he boldly and resolutely persists in it: And he, who esteems him an ignorant Person, reflects on his own Understanding; since all Men of Sense stand confounded at his Words and Actions. Now, if he was a wise, learned, and judicious Person, as most certainly he was, it naturally follows, that the Alteration so made must proceed from some Cause; and as it was great, it must be owing to some great Cause; and as it was sudden, surprising and preternatural; so the Cause must be preternatural too. Now, that Reason which induces us to draw this general Conclusion, ought to prevail on us to make this Inference in particular, that since it was some great supernatural Cause that wrought this sudden Alteration,

tion, it can be no other than That, which St. *Luke* expressly mentions, and St. *Paul* himself, in various Places, acknowledges. He esteemed it, we find, an Happiness to undergo those various Torments he had prepared for others, and after a thousand Anxieties and Afflictions chearfully and triumphantly laid down his Life for the Sake of it. But to proceed to a new Objection.

SEAM.
XI.

The Death of *Herod* likewise, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, is another Difficulty that perverse Men have cavil'd at; for which Reason, I cannot forbear observing, that we have a more particular Account of it transmitted by * *Josephus*, than by St. *Luke* himself. "*Herod*, says he, attended in Person at the Celebration of the Sports in *Cæsarea*, and on the second Day of the Solemnity, early in the Morning, entered the Theatre, dressed in a Robe of Silver of most curious Workmanship. The Rays of the rising Sun, reflected from so splendid a Garb, gave him a majestic and awful Appearance; upon which, some fawning Parasites began to dignify him with the Title of a God, and paid him divine Homage and Adoration: But his proud Heart accepting, at least not rejecting, such sordid Adulation, he presently espied an Owl perching over his Head, felt himself all on a sudden wreck'd with unusual and inexpressible Torments, and, after he had languished for some few Days, expired in a most deplorable Condition, having first openly acknowledged to those impious Sycophants, that he justly deserved the Judgment which the Almighty God had inflicted on him for his boundless Pride and Ambition." Now this particular

* *Joseph. Lib. xix. Antiq. cap. 7.*

Act. xii. 21, 22, 23.

Stam. ticular Accident is only just touched upon by St.
XI. *Luke.* The People, says he, gave a Shout, saying,
 it is the Voice of a God, and not of a Man. Upon
 which, immediately the Angel of the Lord smote him,
 because he gave not God the Glory: And he was eaten
 of Worms, and gave up the Ghost.

These are the principal Difficulties, the most exceptionable Passages, which are objected against in our *New Testament*: And yet these were so far from being private Transactions, that St. Paul, in his Defence before King Agrippa, asserts, that his Life, Behaviour, and miraculous Conversion, were Things well known at Jerusalem, and that he declared nothing but what Moses and the Prophets had foretold; namely, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew Light unto the People and to the Gentiles. And, as a further Demonstration how publick these were, he concludes in the Manner following, *The King knoweth of these Things, before whom I speak freely; for I am persuaded, that none of the Things are hid-den from him; for this Thing was not done in a Corner.*—The King's Answer theroupon was very remarkable, and plainly shewed, that St. Paul had not asserted an idle Fable.—Then Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. Moreover,

The greater Part of the Transactions recorded in the *New Testament* are confirmed by the Writings both of Jews and Gentiles, who mention them with the utmost Surprise and Admiration, and dress them up in the most pompous Descriptions; whereas our Evangelists relate them with an Air of Plainness and Simplicity peculiar to themselves. Now,
 since

since in these Transactions, which are supernatural, they have proved very just and impartial Historians, what reasonable Grounds have we to suspect their Fidelity, in transmitting to us, the Doctrines of the Blessed Jesus? Especially, since, as we have shewn already, they were miraculously assisted by the special Influence of the Holy Spirit, according to the Promises made unto them; and since they underwent the worst of Torments, and that the Cruelty of Man could possibly devise, and Death itself, to justify the Truth of what they wrote; what better Proof can we desire of the Validity of the Christian Religion? Or, indeed, can any Truth be supported by stronger and more substantial Evidence?

To conclude, if the *New Testament* contains the true Doctrine of *Christ Jesus*, as I am sure you have good Reason to be convinced that it does, and was wrote by the immediate Aid and Influence of his Holy Spirit, with what grateful Acknowledgments ought we to embrace those Sacred Books, as containing the Words of Life and Eternal Salvation; as being the Will of the Father, signified to us by his Son, and live up to the Divine Precepts contained in them? How readily ought we, if Occasion should require, to lay down our Lives, as the Holy Apostles and blessed Martyrs did, in Vindication of the Truth of our most Holy Religion; thro' a firm and lively Hope, that we shall one Day rise again in Glory, and inherit those ineffable Joys which are promised in the Gospel?

S E R M O N XII.

The Conclusion.

ACTS viii Ver. 1. latter Part.

Are these Things so?

SERM.
XII.

HAVING in my former Discourses advanced all the Arguments I could think of to demonstrate the Truth of the Christian Religion, I shall beg leave, before I dismiss you, to take a short Review of what has been so laid before you, and to put the Question home to your Hearts, namely, *Are these Things so*, or not, in order to the drawing some useful Conclusions for the Regulation of your future Conduct.

You may remember then, that, in my first Discourse, I proved the Existence of a God, from the various, and inimitable Works of the Creation; from thence I proceeded to demonstrate a Future State, from the Nature of the Soul; from the Miseries of this Life; the unequal Distribution of Rewards and Punishments; and from the universal Consent of Mankind. As these Truths may be clearly proved from the Voice of Nature and Reason, without the Assistance of Revelation, I flatter myself, I brought such Arguments to support the Doctrine proposed, as cannot fairly be confuted. The next Step which I thought necessary to take, was, to demonstrate the divine Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, from various Topicks, which I hope I have done to the Conviction of those of my

my Hearers who might possibly be wavering in their Opinion before. And, that I might not perplex or burthen your Memories with too great a Number of Arguments, I first shewed you, that the Style and Manner in which those Writings of the inspired Penmen are deliver'd, are every Way superior to that of any human Compositions whatsoever; and lastly, as an undeniable Argument of their Validity, I collected, a small Number of Prophecies, small in Comparifon of what might be produced, which I proved to be fulfilled in a wonderful and miraculous Manner: And, as these were principally extracted from the *Old Testament*, in my last Discourse, I selected such Passages from the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, recorded in the *New*, as were most liable to Exception, and proved that other Writers, even their Enemies, confirm'd the Truth of their respective Histories; and when I had satisfied you in that Particular, I imagined, I had nothing more to add, in order to convince you of the Truth of the Christian Religion, than to lay before you the miraculous Manner, in which it was propagated; namely, by the Means only of a few Fishermen and Publicans, who from being weak, timorous, and illiterate Men, grew all on a sudden, not only learned and eloquent, but bold and intrepid; who preach'd up Christ crucified to the Conviction of Thousands, and at last sealed the Truth with their Blood in far distant Parts, and almost all over the Face of the whole habitable Earth. And, in order that no Kind of Proof might be wanting, I laid before you a short History of *St. Paul*, who, being miraculously converted, from a *Jew* became a *Christian*, from a Persecutor a Martyr; who relinquished at once all the Honours and the Pleasures of this World, for the Promulgation of the glad Tidings

SERM.
XII.

of the Gospel; and who gloried in nothing so much, as that God had vouchsafed to call him to the Knowledge of his Son *Jesus Christ*; that he had separated him from the rest of his Nation to preach the Gospel, to suffer all Manner of worldly Shame and Sorrow, and to lay down his Life as a Confirmation of the Truth of those Things which he so openly declared to the whole World. This is the Plan I have pursued, and no essential Article, I hope, has been left unsettled; and therefore I think, I may with Boldness ask the Question in my Text, *Are these Things so?* And I question not, but that all of you will, with one Consent, join with me, and ingenuously acknowledge that they are.

In the Prosecution of those Discourses, you may have observed, that in order to avoid Ambiguity, I have said little or nothing concerning the Mysteries of the Christian Religion; and my Reason for so doing was this, that when I had led you, Step by Step, to a Confession of a few general Truths, such as the Being of a God, the Certainty of a Future State, and the Truth of the Historical Parts of the Sacred Scriptures; when I had demonstrated to you, that the Writings contain'd in the *Old* and *New Testament* were dictated by the Aid and Assistance of the Spirit of God, and that neither the one nor the other could be mere human Compositions, I might then draw this natural and undeniable Conclusion, that every Doctrine, and every Mystery, that can be clearly proved from those Sacred Writings, must command your Assent, tho' beyond the Reach of your weak Comprehension. For 'tis sufficient for us, that we find them recorded as Articles of our Faith in these Sacred Books; and what other or stronger Arguments can we desire for the Confirmation of their Truth? As 'tis
an

an impracticable, so 'tis a dangerous Attempt to SERM.
aim at rendering divine Mysteries easy and intelligi- XII.
ble to any human Comprehension, how exalted so-
ever; and to say that we will believe nothing but
what we can clearly conceive, is equally trifling
and ridiculous; for how many Things are most
incontestably true, that we cannot possibly account
for? All we know is, that they are.—That there
is a God, that all Nature dies, and annually re-
vives, and that we have rational and immortal
Souls, are as great Mysteries of Almighty Power,
as the Doctrine of the Ever-blessed Trinity itself.
That such Things are, we are well assured of, but
how they came to be so, is a Secret resolvable
alone by infinite Wisdom. Is it therefore any
greater Absurdity to believe the Mysteries of our
most Holy Religion, which are so strongly co-
firmed in the Sacred Scriptures, than it is to be-
lieve the Truths above-mentioned? I think it is
not. And therefore, if you will but make the Scrip-
tures the Rule and Standard of your Faith, you can-
not err. Let this be the Touch-stone.—Examine
whether such and such Things as are required of
you to believe and practise are clearly revealed in
those Sacred Writings; if they are, all, I think,
what you have further to do, is, to give your ready As-
sent, and to act accordingly.

Having made these few natural, and, I hope,
useful Observations, I think, I cannot employ the
remaining Part of my Discourse better, than,

- I. In shewing how far Reason may confirm us in
the Belief of those Sacred Mysteries which are
recorded in the Holy Scriptures. And,
- II. In offering a few Motives for prevailing on you
to embrace the Doctrines of the Church of Eng-

SERM. *land, rather than those of any other Commu-*
 XII. *nion whatsoever.*

And, to conclude the whole, it may be necessary to remind you, how much your eternal Interest requires a Life and Practice, suitable to the Purity of your Faith.

First then, I am to shew how Reason may confirm us in the Belief of those Sacred Mysteries which are recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

Though it must be acknowledged, that there are several fundamental Truths of too intricate, too exalted a Nature, to be in the least discern'd by the dim Light of Reason; yet I will venture to assert, that such is the prevailing Power and Energy of Reason, that she will confirm us in the Belief of such Things as are even beyond herself, and the Capacity of the most intelligent created Being perfectly to conceive: Nay, which is still more, that upon the Revelation of such and such Things to us, the mysterious Secrets whereof our Reason, in its utmost Elevation, could never penetrate into; that very Reason, which would never have discovered them, or found any satisfactory Ground of Assent unto them, is able, notwithstanding those Mysteries were altogether invisible before, to strengthen and confirm our Faith. Our Eye directs us to the Contemplation of invisible Objects, by the Survey of such as are visible; without the former of which it were impossible the latter should subsist. As for Example, we contemplate the Great God, who is invisible, by that glorious, tho' inanimate Creature of his, the Sun, which is daily obvious to our View; no sooner does he begin to gild this lower World with Light, but our Eye discerns a thousand Objects, which before lay conceal'd in the dark
 Shades

Shades of Night; not that our Sight was in the least deficient, or those Objects less visible, but because the Sun was not arisen, and had not enlightened the Air, by which Means the Eye sees, and Objects are discerned. "Thus God is to the Conscience, what Light is to the Eye; first he is seen, then all Things are seen by it." And by "the Light of the Sacred Scriptures we find *there are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: And these Three are One.*

The ^b Incarnation of our Blessed Redeemer is another Mystery, of which no Man ever could, or ever will have any adequate Idea; and yet Reason is able, not only to persuade us to, and confirm us in the Belief of it, but to furnish us also with substantial Arguments to defend it. She will plainly demonstrate, that the Miracles which *Jesus* wrought, considered in themselves, could not be the Operations of any Man, Devil, or Angel, but of the great God himself, the Creator of Heaven and Earth; from the Account and Nature of them, from Conclusions drawn from Principles grounded thereupon, and those very Historians, who were his most inveterate Enemies, and opposed, with the greatest Zeal, the Doctrines he advanced. And what is the Consequence of all this, but that, since he wrought his Miracles by a divine Power, he must be sent from God, and therefore, 'tis our indispensable Duty to hearken to, and believe in him? To believe that he is God, the Son of God, forasmuch as he has declared himself to be so in his Word; and Man, born of a Woman, since whole Multitudes were Eye-witnesses of it; and that were it otherwise, he wou'd be an Enemy to God, and God an Enemy to Mankind, God; I say,

M 3

who

^a 1 John v. 7.

^b Matt. i. John i. 14.

SERM. who is too gracious, too merciful to give him Power
 XII. only to undo us; and too wise, too considerate, to
 send him his Holy Spirit to fully and eclipse the
 Brightness of his own Glory. And should any
 one be prophane enough to start any Objections
 here, Reason will stand up, and plainly demon-
 strate to him, that *Christ's* Incarnation was alto-
 gether agreeable both to the Justice and Goodness
 of the Almighty, absolutely necessary for Man's
 Salvation, easily accomplished by a Power omni-
 potent, in all Respects conformable to the Divine
 Will, and his gracious Promises, highly useful,
 and instructive to us in our Exercise of Humilia-
 tion, and tho' full of Condescension, no ways
 unworthy of the King of Kings.

Here I shall stop; for all the Mysteries men-
 tioned in our Creed have sufficient Warrant from
 Holy Scripture, and therefore my Enumeration of
 them, would be altogether unnecessary, and my
 principal Aim in making mention of the fore-
 going, which I take to be the greatest, and those
 which licentious Men have given themselves a Li-
 berty to censure, was to demonstrate to you the
 Usefulness and Necessity of pondering these mo-
 mentous Articles in our Hearts with Modesty and
 Humility, since we publickly, and in the most so-
 lemn Manner profess, that whoever does not as-
 sent to the Truth of these essential Points can
 never be saved.

I shall now proceed to the second Thing pro-
 posed, namely, to offer a few Motives to prevail
 on you to embrace the Doctrines of the Church of
England, rather than those of any other Commu-
 nion whatsoever.

And here the Nature of my Subject will lead
 me to speak of the most essential Errors of the
 Church of *Rome* in particular, and to address my-
 self

self to the Dissenters in general from the estab- SERM.
lished Church of this Kingdom, however distin- XII.
guished.

I shall contract what I have to say into as small a Compass as possible; since most of my Hearers have, I presume, some Ideas of both, and those that have not, may be easily informed.

Of the numerous Errors of the *Romish* Church, these that follow are some of the most fundamental. Their monstrous Superstition in acknowledging the *Pope* as the *Infallible* and *Supreme Head* of the Church; whereas our Blessed Saviour condemns our having such exalted Notions of any Man. *There is none good but one, that is God.* Their Idolatry in worshipping the *Virgin Mary*, the *Saints*, &c. and prostrating themselves before their *Shrines*, in direct Opposition to so many express Declarations in Scripture, particularly the Second Commandment:

M 4

Their

^c *Matt. xix. 17.* See *Hammond's* Paraphrase.

^a Of all the Superstitions of the *Romish* Church, this is the most enormous, and most deserving of our severest Censures; for they are not contented with barely making their Intercessions to her, but pay her the Tribute of divine Adoration in almost every Corner of their Streets where her Image is erected, and decked in all the Pomp and Majesty, that the most bigotted Devotees can possibly devise. As our Blessed Saviour was apprehensive, that too many weak Persons would be drawn, by a misguided Zeal, into such an unwarrantable Act of Devotion, so has he particularly provided against it, and has embraced every favourable Opportunity of restraining all such extravagant Testimonies of their Veneration for her. For when he was told that his Mother and Brethren were without; *Who*, says he, *is my Mother, and who are my Brethren?* *Matt. xii. 48.* to the End. And when a certain Woman lifted up her Voice, and said unto him, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked;* *Luke xi. 27.* our Saviour seems, as it were, to check her exalted Opinion of his Mother, and immediately replies,—*Yea rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it,* ver. 28.

SERM. Their Performance of Divine Service in an unknown Tongue, so contrary to the Example of the Blessed *Jesus*, who condescended to adapt his Words to the meanest Capacities; their Denial of the Use of the Bible to the Laity, so repugnant to the Advice of our Saviour himself, who enjoined us to *search the Scriptures*, in order to our being convinced of the Truth of his Divinity; their absurd Doctrine of Transubstantiation, founded on our Saviour's saying *take, eat; this is my Body, &c.* which was evidently as allegorical a Saying, and must at first Sight appear so to any unprejudiced Person, as when he said *I am the Door,—I am the Vine, &c.* Their ridiculous Notions of Purgatory, and their mercenary Masses to release Mens Souls from thence, and many other Fopperies, wherewith they lead astray the weak and deluded Multitude; the Enumeration whereof would take up more Time than can be spared me at present: Besides, as they have all been so well exposed and confuted already, both by the Writers and Preachers of the Church of *England*, there is scarce any one so ignorant, as not to be able to silence the Abettors of so bad a Cause.

Tho' the Reformers, who established our Church upon the Footing it now is, were very careful to purge away every wicked and absurd Doctrine of the *Romish* Church, yet they took care to preserve what was truly conformable both to Scripture and Reason. They were not so prejudiced and prepossessed, as to reject any Thing that was decent and lawful, tho' a Part of their Rubrick: Decency in Divine Worship is not only innocent, but necessary: The common Consent of all Nations

* St. *John* v. 39.

† St. *John* x. 7, 8.

‡ St. *Matt.* xxvi. 26.

§ St. *John* xv. 1.

tions speaks this, and Nothing can possibly be al- SERM.
 ledged against it. The wearing of particular XII.
 Dresses therefore, and the various Postures of
 standing, kneeling, or sitting at appointed Times,
 are, doubtless, Ceremonies innocent in themselves,
 and no where prohibited in Holy Writ. Ser, or
 precomposed Forms of Prayer were always made
 use of by the *Jews*; and our Blessed Saviour him-
 self recommends them, by giving us a pure and
 perfect Pattern of his own for our Imitation.
 For, 'after he had been *praying in a certain Place*,
 and *one of his Disciples* had said unto him, in the
 Name of the Rest; *Lord, teach us to pray, as*
John also taught his Disciples, the Answer which
 he gave is a full Demonstration, that he thought
 the Request not only reasonable, but requisite.
When ye pray, said he to them, without the least
 Hesitation; *say, Our Father, &c.* Can any Thing
 be more express in Favour of Common Prayer than
 this? Moreover, Reason declares aloud for it: For
 how can the Illiterate express themselves in a be-
 coming Manner, without some such proper Assist-
 ance as a Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer?
 And if another prays for them, as is the usual
 Method observed by the Dissenters in general, how
 can they with Safety join with their Minister, when
 they know not before-hand what he will say?
 From whence to me it appears very absurd, to offer
 up to the Divine Majesty any publick Prayers with-
 out some suitable Premeditation. And, I believe,
 even our Enemies will allow, that our Liturgy
 abounds with Prayers, as well adapted to every
 Person and Occasion, as any that ever were com-
 posed. I should have waved these Reflections,
 had

¹ St. Luke xi. & seq.

SERM. had not the most specious Pretences for a Separation arisen from the Use of Common Prayer.

XII.

The *Romish* Church have undeniably always had Emissaries to poison the Minds of those, who are so weak and unhappy as to listen to them; and since, as I have before observed, the Errors and Idolatry of the Church of *Rome* have been so judiciously detected, and exposed, that the Minds of the Generality of the People are well affected to the established Church, they have made it their constant Practice to draw aside such as were unwary, and easy to be prevailed on: To this End, at diverse Times, diverse new-fangled Doctrines have appeared; and too many Persons have been led astray by them. Mankind are for the Generality fond of Novelty; and what is unintelligible is too often admired by the Vulgar. Our Enemies well know, that to divide, is the only Way to ruin us; for which Reason, no Pains nor Expence has been wanting to render the Dissenters a formidable Body to the established Church; but yet, praised be God! she has always been able to look down upon her Enemies with an Eye of Compassion, rather than Fear; and has made it her Study to gain upon her Adversaries, not only by the strongest and most cogent Arguments, but by the most endearing Testimonies of sincere Love and Friendship, rather than by Acts of Severity and Oppression. And 'tis with Pleasure I can close what I have said, with observing, that the Dissenters of all Denominations are daily dropping some of their ill-grounded Scruples; and I am apt to believe, were it not for a little petulant Pride, that lurks within them, many of them would sue to be admitted into our established Church. For this Reason give me leave to address myself,

First,

First, To you, who profess yourselves Mem- SERM.
bers of the Church of *England*; and here let me XII.
prevail on you, not only to continue firm in that
Persuasion, but likewise by your Lives and Conver-
sations, to endeavour to win over as many as may
be to your Community; to remember always,
that Example will prevail, where Precept will
prove of little Use; to remember likewise that our
Lord and Master was a perfect Pattern of Patience
and Humility. I will not deny but a becoming
Warmth may sometimes be necessary, and we
should doubtless be blame-worthy in making too
servile Submissions: However, then we should not
exert our Zeal, unless the Honour of God, and the
Peace of his Church should require it at our
Hands.

Our Church is doubtless free from all those Su-
perstitions and Idolatry, which have justly cast an
Odium on the *Romish* Community: We should
not suffer therefore any of our Doctrines to fall to
the Ground; but should transmit them to latest
Posterity with the same amiable Purity as we re-
ceived them. Let us not therefore join with those,
who would impose Conceits of their own for the
Doctrines of Christ; who meet in Fields, and
private Assemblies, and pretend to Inspirations
and Motions of the Spirit, which none, I am per-
suaded, do now feel, since miraculous Effusions of
the Holy Ghost have long since ceased; nor is
there at this Time any Occasion for a Continuance
of such Miracles; since the Christian Religion is
established upon so solid a Basis, that the Gates of
Hell cannot prevail against it. Nor have we
now any Necessity for clandestine Meetings; since
we are protected by the Laws of our Land,
in the free Exercise of our Religion; and our
Churches are always open to those who have In-
clination

SERM.

XII.

clination to worship God in Publick; and such Separations only serve to unsettle Mens Notions; and lay them open to the Attacks of the Enemies of our Religion.

On the other hand, let me intreat those, if any such are here, who profess themselves Dissenters from the established Church, to be well satisfied that they do it for Conscience Sake; and, as I am inclined to believe they detest Popery as much as we, it may be worth their serious Consideration to reflect, that every one, that dissents from the established Church, weakens the Protestant Interest, and gives Occasion of Triumph to the Church of *Rome*. Let them consider what Objections they have to make, and whether there is any one Point in our Worship contrary to the Will of God declared in the Sacred Scriptures; if they cannot say there is, 'tis a sinful Obstinacy for them to walk by themselves, when the Laws and Welfare of their Country demand their Union. In a Word, we defy the most inveterate of our Enemies to produce any Thing, either in our Creed, or Mode of Worship, repugnant to the written Word of God: And if we propose to them nothing as an Article of Faith, but what we can clearly prove from Scripture; and if they cannot produce any Church equal to ours for the Innocence and Decency of our Forms, the Purity of our Doctrines, and the Excellence of our Liturgy, as I trust they cannot, then I would willingly ask, why any, of our own Nation at least, should dissent from us? And devoutly were it to be wished, that those of our Neighbours, who are sunk into Idolatry, would permit their Eyes to be opened; but that is an Event we must leave to the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God to bring to pass, in his own due Time and Way.

I shall

I shall hasten now to conclude the whole, by **SERM.** reminding you, how much your eternal Interest **XII.** requires a Life and Practice, suitable to the Purity of your Faith.

Men, and Brethren, *Are these Things so?* Is there a God above, who sees, and knows our most secret Thoughts and Actions? Is there a Life after This, where we shall dwell for ever, either in the most exquisite Torments, or the most consummate Joys? Were the Holy Scriptures dictated by the Spirit of God? And did the Blessed *Jesus* lay down his Life, to procure eternal Happiness for us? — Must not the Evangelists and Apostles be fully convinced of the Truth of those Transactions which they recorded, when they cheerfully laid down their Lives as an everlasting Testimony of them? And may not the Christian Cause boast of the strongest Evidence that ever was produced in Favour of any Truth? If these Things are so, as I hope you are all convinced they are, and as I am sure you have every Reason you can desire to induce you to assent to them, then be persuaded to lend an attentive Ear, to those Things that are required of you. — Think how nearly you are concerned to believe, think how greatly it behoves you to practise all the Virtues which are recommended to you in those Books, which were composed by the Inspiration of God himself.

The Lord our God requires nothing from his Creatures but what will be greatly conducive to their Good. He has vouchsafed to be reconciled to us, after our unhappy Fall; and to promise to receive us into his Rest, thro' the Merits of Christ *Jesus*, his Son. He has moreover given us the Sacred Scriptures for our Rule of Life; and enjoined us to meditate therein. *He hath shewed thee, O Man,*

SERM. *Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* He hath, moreover, been graciously pleased, to add to these inexpressible Mercies his solemn Promise, that even the most wicked and abandon'd Man, if he will but *turn away from his Wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.*

You, therefore, who have hitherto, to the best of your Abilities, observed the Will of the Lord to do it, never let slip so glorious a Hope, and such a transporting Prospect, as that which eternal Life affords you. Continue steadfast in the Paths of Virtue, and you will surely meet with true Contentment here, and ineffable Happiness hereafter. And you, who have been so unhappy, as hitherto to have been negligent of your future Felicity, consider how precarious Life and Health are; look round and see, how suddenly the most blooming and vigorous of your Friends drop off, and sink into Eternity, and reflect with yourselves, that this Night perhaps your Soul may be required of you, and then be negligent if you can. Consider all your past Deportment as irrecoverable; and if you look back, let it be with a View only of making your Peace in Heaven, by a hearty Repentance, and a steady Resolution to lead a new and a better Life. Put your whole Trust and Confidence in the Lord, and doubt not of Acceptance; for he that cannot lye, has promised, that *though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.*

But,

¹ Ezek. xviii. 27.

² Isai ah i. 18.

But, if there be any still so unhappy, as to be SERM.
deaf to Persuasion; if there be any still so neg- XII.
ligent, as not to concern themselves about the
Truth or Falshood of the Christian Religion; let not
us, who build all our Hopes in the Promises contained
in the Sacred Scriptures, be remiss in putting up our
most fervent Prayers for them, that the Almighty
will rouse them up, and make them conscious
of their Danger. Let us point out to them, after
we have demonstrated the Divine Authority of
the Sacred Scriptures, those Passages where eter-
nal Death is denounced against all impenitent and
obdurate Sinners. Let us set before them the
Horrors of that solemn Day, when the Almighty
Judge shall summon Mankind before his awful
Tribunal; and consign the Wicked to endless
never-ceasing Misery: Surely, when the Terrors
which the Damned are to feel, are set before their
Eyes, they will shudder at the dreadful Thought.
—Surely, when they are thoroughly awakened,
they will esteem the Pleasures of Sin but a poor
Compensation for the Loss of Heaven; especially,
as they must exchange it for a Place, where no
Glimpse of Joy can ever enter, where the Yellings
of the Damned, and the ¹Flames of the bottom-
less

¹ The Torments of Hell are described by Fire, both in the
Old and New Testament. Moses inveighing against the *Israelites*
who rebelled against the Lord, says to them, *A Fire is kind-*
led in mine Anger, &c. Deut. xxxiii. 22. *Isaiab* is still more
express, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring Fire,*
&c. *Isaiab* xxxiii. 14. and lxvi. 24. Our Saviour makes use
of the same Similitude, to represent the Punishment of the
Damned. See *Mark* ix. 44. *Matt.* xxv. 41. There are some,
who maintain, that by Fire, is to be understood, a real, ele-
mentary and material Fire, not an allegorical and figurative
one. Among the Abettors of this Opinion are *Austin, Cyprian,*
Chrysostom, Jerom, &c. Cruden.

SERM.
XII.

less Pit will forever surround them, where they will suffer every Moment for endless Ages, the inexpressible Torments of the most agonizing Death, and at last, be not one Moment nearer their Release; where they will become dreadful Examples of God's vindictive Justice, and have the Gates of Hell closed upon them, never to be opened more.

That so dreadful an End awaits such as depart this Life without making their Peace with God, is very evident from a thousand Places in Scripture; and, therefore, should any be so presumptuous, as to flatter themselves that these Things are not so, they are in the most dreadful Situation imaginable. Much rather, O gracious God, afflict us with Poverty and Contempt, Pain and Sickness, Grief and Disappointment; than by such a fatal Delusion, to lose our immortal Souls, for the Ransom whereof thy blessed Son hath paid so excessively dear, hath shed his most precious Blood, and, in a Word, hath submitted to the most ignominious and painful Death, even the Death of the Cross.

As none of my Hearers, I hope, need such awakening Scenes of Horror to call them to a Sense of their Condition, let us turn our Thoughts from such a gloomy Subject to another more engaging, where we cannot fail of filling the Imagination with the most delightful and transporting Ideas. Let us reflect on the indulgent Promises of the Almighty, and contemplate on the pleasing Prospect of a never-ending State of Bliss. For a short Duration, indeed, we are to endure whatever Afflictions the Almighty shall see convenient to lay upon us: However, if we bear up under them with Patience and Resignation to the Divine Will; if we do but our Duty with chearful Hearts,

we have the best Assurance that can be of an ample Recompence, an Assurance equal to the greatest Certainty; since promised by an Almighty, an Infinitely-just, and Indulgent God. To give you the least adequate Idea of the happy State of the Saints in Glory, would require the Skill of the warmest Genius, and be a Task too arduous, I own, for me to undertake; but this we may venture to assert, that every Thing we can conceive of Happiness, the fondest Hopes with which we can feed our longing Souls, will fall infinitely short of the glorious and delightful State of those, who tread the Paths of Virtue, who love Justice and Mercy, and walk humbly with their God.

I have now, thro' the Blessing of God, said all I at first proposed on the Truth of the Christian Religion, and am fully persuaded, that the Arguments which I have collected, will incline the attentive Hearer to become from henceforth, if he be not already, a Follower of the Blessed Jesus. And tho' I am not insensible of my Inability to execute my Work in so artful a Manner as might be expected, yet the Truths I have been treating of carry Conviction along with them, and stand in no Need of the weak Aid and Assistance of human Eloquence; all I think necessary to add, is, that throughout the whole, I have not advanced any one Position, but what appears, to the best of my Judgment, to be strictly true, and for that Reason worthy of our most serious Regard: Accept, therefore, of my sincere tho' weak Endeavours, and let not the Unworthiness of the Preacher prepossess you against the Doctrines he has recommended to your Practice, which are doubtless of the last Importance; and, if what I have said should prove of the least Benefit to my Fellow-candidates for the Joys of Heaven, to God be

SERM. ascribed all the Glory. For my Part, the only Praise
XII. I shall ever seek will be, to deserve the Title of
 a faithful Minister of God's Holy Word; and I
 humbly beseech the Almighty to grant me his
 Grace, that I may always keep such a watchful
 Eye over my own Conduct, as never to bring the
 least Reproach on that Holy Church, of which I
 boast myself to be a Member.





SELECT
FORMS OF PRAYER
For the Use of
Private Families;
Principally Extracted from the
LITURGY,
OF THE
CHURCH of *England.*



WOMEN OF THE EAST

Private Property

LIT. CO.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

T H E

MORNING SERVICE.

Ejaculatory Sentences.

WE lift up our Eyes to the Hills from whence
cometh our Help.

O Lord, keep us from Sin and Danger this Day,
for Jesus Christ his Sake.

We laid us down and slept, and rose up again;
for thou, Lord, hast sustained us,

In Thee do we put our Trust all the Day long,
let us not be confounded.

The General Confession.

ALmighty and most merciful Father, we have
erred and strayed from thy Ways like lost
Sheep. We have followed too much the Devices
and Desires of our own Hearts. We have offend-
ed against thy Holy Laws. We have left undone
those Things which we ought to have done; and
we have done those Things which we ought not
to have done: And there is no Health in us. But
thou, O Lord, have Mercy upon us, miserable
Offenders. Spare thou them, O God, which con-
fess their Faults. Restore thou them that are pe-
nitent; according to thy Promises declared unto
Mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O
most merciful Father, for his Sake, that we may
hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober Life,
to the Glory of thy Holy Name. *Amen.*

Morning Service.

A Prayer for Pardon.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully hear our Prayers, and spare all those who confess their Sins unto thee; that they whose Consciences by Sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be absolved, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Peace.

O God, who art the Author of Peace and Lover of Concord, in Knowledge of whom standeth our eternal Life, whose Service is perfect Freedom, defend us thy humble Servants in all Assaults of our Enemies, that we, surely trusting in thy Defence, may not fear the Power of any Adversaries, through the Might of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Grace.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, Almighty and Everlasting God, who hast, safely brought us to the Beginning of this Day, defend us in the same with thy mighty Power, and grant that this Day we fall into no Sin, neither run into any Kind of Danger; but that all our Doings may be ordered by thy Governance, to do always that which is righteous in thy Sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Support under Temptations.

O Lord, we beseech thee give us Grace to withstand the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil; and with a pure Heart and Mind

Morning Service.

Mind to follow thee, the only true God, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for a Heavenly Frame.

A Lmighty God, who alone canst order our unruly Wills and Affections, grant, we beseech thee, that we may love the Things which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise; that so, among the sundry and manifold Changes of this World, our Hearts may surely there be fixed, where true Joys are to be found, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Love of God and Religion.

O Lord of all Power and Might, who art the Author and Giver of all good Things, graft in our Hearts the Love of thy Name; increase in us thy true Religion; nourish us with all Goodness; and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Faith, Hope, and Charity.

A Lmighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the Increase of Faith, Hope, and Charity; and, in order to our obtaining that which thou hast promised, make us to love that which thou commandest, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for general Preservation.

A Lmighty God, who seest that we have no Power of ourselves, keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that

Morning Service.

we may be defended from all Adversities which happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts which either disturb or pollute the Mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for his Majesty, and all the Royal Family.

O Lord our God, who upholdest and governeest all Things in Heaven and Earth, receive our humble Prayers for our Sovereign Lord, set over us by thy Grace and Providence to be our King; and so, together with him, bless their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of *Wales*, the Duke, the Princesses, the Issue of the Prince and Princess of *Wales*, and all the Royal Family; let the Dew of thy Heavenly Benediction descend upon them, that they, ever trusting in thy Goodness, may be protected by thy Power, and be crowned with thy peculiar Favour, and may continue before thee in uninterrupted Peace, Joy and Honour, and may spend a long and happy Life upon the Earth, and after Death may obtain an everlasting Crown of Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven, through the Merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth ever one God, World without End. *Amen.*

A general Prayer, proper to close the Morning Service.

O God, we believe in thee, do thou strengthen our Faith. All our Expectations are from thee, do thou confirm our Hope. We love thee, do thou inflame our Affections. We are sorry for our manifold Sins; do thou increase our Repentance. We adore thee as our first Principle; we desire thee as our last End: We thank thee, as our perpetual

Morning Service.

perpetual Benefactor, and we call upon thee, as our supreme Defender. O God, be thou pleased to guide us by thy Wisdom, rule us by thy Justice, comfort us by thy Mercy, and keep us by thy Power. To thee we dedicate our Thoughts, Words and Actions; that from henceforth we may think of thee, speak of thee, and act according to thy Will. We beseech thee to enlighten our Understandings, to purify our Bodies, and sanctify our Souls. Enable us, O God, sincerely to repent of our past Offences, to conquer our future Temptations, to reduce our Passions which are too strong for us, and to practise the Virtues that become us. Fill our Hearts with a tender Remembrance of thy Favours, an Aversion to our Infirmities, a Love for our Neighbours, and a Contempt of the World. Let us always remember to be submissive to our Superiors, faithful to our Friends, charitable to our Enemies, and indulgent to our Inferiors. Enable us, O God, to overcome Pleasure by Mortification, Covetousness by Alms, Anger by Meekness, and Luke-warmness by Devotion. Make us prudent, O God, in all our Undertakings, patient under Disappointments, and humble in Success. Let us never forget to be fervent in Prayer, temperate in our Food, and diligent in our Employments. Enable us, O God, to be modest in our Deportment, regular in our Conduct, and exemplary in our Lives and Conversations. Let us always apply our Minds to resist Nature, assist Grace, keep thy Commandments, and labour to be saved. Convince us of the Vanity of all earthly Enjoyments, the Transports of those above, the Shortness of Time, and the Duration of Eternity. Grant that we may be ever prepared for the Day of our Dissolution, that we may dread thy Judgments, escape thy Wrath,
and

Morning Service.

and be admitted at last into thy heavenly Rest. And this we humbly beg for the Sake of thy dearly beloved Son, who died for us, and in Compassion to our Infirmities hath taught, and commanded us, when we pray, to say,

OUR Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come; thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Blessing.

O Lord, bless us, and keep us this Day. **O** Lord, make thy Face to shine upon us, and be gracious unto us. **O** Lord, lift up the Light of thy Countenance upon us, and give us thy Peace both now and evermore. *Amen.*



THE

T H E

EVENING SERVICE.

Ejaculatory Sentences.

HAVE Mercy upon us, O Lord, that we may speak unto thee, and praise thy Holy Name.

Let our Prayers be set forth in thy Sight as Incense, and the Lifting up of our Hands be an Evening Sacrifice acceptable unto thee.

We will not suffer our Eyes to sleep, nor our Eye-lids to slumber, neither our Hands to lie down to Rest, till we have lifted up our Eyes unto the Hills from whence cometh our Help.

Our Help cometh from thee, O Lord, who hast made Heaven and Earth.

Thou art about our Paths, and about our Beds, and espiest out all our Ways.

For, lo! there is not a Word in our Tongues, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.

O! remember not the Sins nor Offences of our Youth, but according to thy Mercies think upon us, O Lord, for thy Goodness Sake.

Comfort the Souls of thy Servants; for unto thee, O Lord, do we lift up our Souls.

We will lay us down in Peace, and take our Rest; for it is thou, O Lord, only that makest us to dwell in Safety.

Into thy Hands we commend our Spirits; for thou hast redeemed us, O Lord, thou God of Truth.

Consider

Evening Service.

Consider and hear us, O Lord our God; enlighten our Eyes, that we sleep not in Death.

The General Confession.

A Almighty and most Merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy Ways like lost Sheep. We have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts. We have offended against thy Holy Laws. We have left undone those Things which we ought to have done; and have done those Things which we ought not to have done: And there is no Health in us. But thou, O Lord, have Mercy upon us miserable Offenders. Spare thou us, O God, who confess our Faults. Restore thou us who are penitent, according to thy Promises declared unto Mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most Merciful Father, for his Sake, that we may hereafter live a godly righteous and sober Life, to the Glory of thy Holy Name. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Pardon.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully hear our Prayers, and spare all those, who confess their Sins unto thee; that they, whose Consciences by Sin are accused, by thy merciful Pardon may be absolved, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Peace.

O God, from whom all holy Desires, all good Counsels, and all just Works do proceed, give unto thy Servants that Peace which the World cannot give; that both our Hearts may be
set

Evening Service.

set to obey thy Commandments, and also that by thee, we being defended from the Fear of our Enemies, may pass our Time in Rest and Quietness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Protection.

Lighten our Darknes, we beseech thee, O Lord, and by thy great Mercy defend us from all the Perils and Dangers of this Night, for the Love of thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Acceptance.

O God, the Strength of all them who put their Trust in thee, mercifully accept our Prayers, and because, thro' the Weakness of our mortal Natures, we can do no good Thing without thy Assistance, grant us the Help of thy Grace, that in keeping thy Commandments we may please thee both in Will and Deed, thro' Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Love of God.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good Things as pass Man's Understanding, pour into our Hearts such Love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all Things, may obtain thy Promises, which exceed all we can desire, thro' Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

A Prayer for Preservation.

O Almighty and most Merciful Father, of thy bountiful Goodness keep us we beseech thee from all Things that may hurt us; that we, being ready both in Body and Soul, may chearfully accomplish

Evening Service.

complish those Things which thou wouldest have done, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the King's Majesty.

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, High and Mighty, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Only Ruler of Princes, who dost from thy Throne behold all the Dwellers upon Earth, most heartily we beseech thee with thy Favour to behold our most gracious and Sovereign Lord King GEORGE I, and so replenish him with the Grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he may always incline to thy Will, and walk in thy Way: Endue him plenteously with heavenly Gifts, grant him in Health and Wealth long to live; strengthen him, that he may vanquish and overcome all his Enemies, and finally after this Life may attain everlasting Joy and Felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Royal Family.

A Almighty God, the Fountain of all Goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless their Royal Highnesses FREDERICK Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, the Duke, the Princesses, the Issue of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and all the Royal Family: Endue them with thy Holy Spirit; enrich them with thy heavenly Grace; prosper them with all Happiness; and bring them to thine everlasting Kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A General

Evening Service.

A General Thanksgiving.

Almighty God, Father of all Mercies, we thine unworthy Servants do give thee most humble and hearty Thanks for all thy Goodness and Loving-kindness to us and to all Men. We bless thee for our Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life, but above all, for thine inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the Means of Grace, and for the Hope of Glory. And we beseech thee give us that due Sense of all thy Mercies, that our Hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may shew forth thy Praise, not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, by giving up ourselves to thy Service, and by walking before thee in Holiness and Righteousness all our Days, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without End. *Amen.*

A Prayer, proper to close the Evening Service.

Almighty God, who hast promised to hear the Petitions of them that ask in thy Son's Name; we beseech thee mercifully to incline thine Ears to us, who have made now our Prayers and Supplications unto thee; and grant that those Things which we have faithfully asked, according to thy Will, may effectually be obtained, to the Relief of our Necessity, and to the setting forth of thy Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who in Compassion to our Infirmities hath taught, and commanded us, when we pray, to say,

Our

Evening Service.

OUR Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this Day our daily Bread. And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into Temptation; but deliver us from Evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Blessing.

THE Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, thy Love, O heavenly Father, thy Comfort and Consolation, O Holy and Blessed Spirit, be with us, and remain with us, this Night and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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